Religious Transformations and Socio-Political Change

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Religious Transformations and Socio-Political Change

Eastern Europe and Latin America

Edited by
Luther Martin

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Dedicated to the memory of
Witold Tyloch

Preface

The papers in this volume were first presented at a special conference of the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR), hosted by the North American Association for the Study of Religion (NAASR) at The University of Vermont, Burlington, VT, August 5—9, 1991. The choice of its theme was suggested by the extent of changes sweeping Eastern Europe at the time of its conception. In May 1989, Hungary opened its border with Austria; in June, the Solidarity trade union movement won control of a new Polish parliament; and, most dramatic of all, in November, the Berlin Wall fell, followed in quick succession by a bloodless coup in Bulgaria, the "velvet revolution" in Czechoslovakia, and, by the end of the year, the bloody popular uprising in Romania. But no one had foreseen the even more dramatic changes still to come. The weeks following the conference witnessed the beginnings of the dissolution of the Soviet Union itself.

The formal possibilities for international discussions between scholars of religion had dramatically expanded when new Chinese, Czechoslovakian, Indonesian, Latin American, North American, Quebec, and Soviet associations for the study of religion, together with a revitalized Hungarian association became affiliated with the IAHR at its XVth Congress in Rome, September 1990. It seemed appropriate that the first major activity of NAASR since its affiliation with the IAHR be to host a special conference of the IAHR that would not only continue our working relationships with colleagues to the north, but would also recognize new contacts with the Asociación Latinoamericano para el Estudio de las Religiones, a relationship that was further enhanced when members of NAASR were invited to participate in the IV Congreso Latinoamericano sobre Religión y Etnicidad in Mexico City, summer 1992.

Additionally, we wished to continue conversations begun in 1989 at a special conference of the IAHR hosted in Warsaw by the Polish Society for the Science of Religion during the very week the new Polish government was being formed. This meeting was organized by Professor † Witold Tyloch to whom this volume is dedicated. The Burlington conference was attended by a number of the participants in the Warsaw conference and represented a continuing conversation between Eastern European and Western scholars within the context of the IAHR. To this end, not only was the Polish Society for the Science of Religion represented at this conference, but also the Czech, Hungarian, and Soviet associations. At this writing, the fate and future of the Soviet Association for the History of Religions remains unknown.

The conference sought also to extend discussions begun at the Warsaw conference in a substantive way. The theme of the Warsaw conference is reflected in the title of its published proceedings, *Studies on religions in the context of social sciences* (ed. Tyloch Warsaw: Polish Society for the Science of Religions, 1990). In a "Concluding Statement", participants agreed that the history of religions might fruitfully be reconceived as "a human and cultural science" with a consequent "shift in attention to the meaning of religion in social interaction" (Tyloch 1990: 8). In order to focus our deliberations, we decided not only to specify the interaction between religious and political transformations as the theme of the Burlington conference but to limit our discussions to religio-political change in those geographical areas within which scholarly interchange within the framework of the IAHR had recently been initiated: Eastern Europe and Latin America. (The affiliation of the Chinese Association for Religious Study was recognized by a regional conference of the IAHR held in Beijing, April 1992).

The volume opens with a historical consideration of the intersection of the religious and the political: ancient Babylon, pre-Islamic Iran, and the Hellenistic World, and a critique of this model as Eurocentric. In the second and third sections of the volume, a variety of specific issues in the contemporary Eastern European and Latin American contexts are addressed. In addition to the timeliness of these reflections, what

characterizes a number of these presentations, especially with respect to Eastern Europe, is the attempt to develop a language and set of concepts for the analysis and articulation of what has become known in the European and American contexts as the academic study of religion, a study that has been dominated in Latin America by anthropological discourse. These theoretical concerns are the focus for the final section of volume.

Attending the conference but not presenting papers were Professors Jean Leclant (Institut de France, Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres and Vice-President of the IAHR) and Michael Pye (University of Lancaster and Secretary-General of the IAHR). The paper by Professor Ugo Bianchi (University of Rome and President of the IAHR) was read *in absentia*. Unfortunately, it was not possible to include the paper presented by Professor Lawrence Sullivan (Director, Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University and Deputy Secretary-General of the IAHR) on "The Tragic End of Atawalipa: Eschatological Drama and Political Upheaval".

The success of any conference depends upon the support of many organizations and individuals. The conference was funded by generous grants from the Centre for Religious Studies of the University of Toronto, the Council for European Studies, the International Research and Exchanges Board, the Humanities Division of the University of California, Santa Cruz, and The University of Vermont (the Office of the President, with additional support by the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, the International Studies Program, the Department of Religion, and the Division of Continuing Education). None of these funding agencies are, of course, responsible for any of the views expressed.

In addition, special recognition is due several people whose effort was exceeded only by their graciousness in contributing to the efficient and effective work of the conference: Ms. Ruth Kurtz, secretary to the Department of Religion, who oversaw countless details in the organization and smooth running of the conference; Professor and Mrs. William Paden, and Rux S. Martin, who hosted, respectively, the

opening and closing receptions of the conference; Emily Hammond and Kim Duncan, student volunteers who assisted participants with their work throughout the week of the conference; and Melanie Clark, who not only volunteered as a student assistant but who then typed, with notable accuracy, the conference presentations onto computer files facilitating, thereby, their final editing and timely publication. Finally, Dr. George Brown of Burlington, who had attended the sessions of the conference, and Michael Diemer II generously offered their help proofreading the final manuscript.

Luther H. Martin
Underhill Center, Vermont
September 1992

Contents

Preface vii

Luther H. Martin
Introduction 1

Historical models

Barbara Nevling Porter
Gods' statues as a tool of Assyrian political policy: Esarhaddon's return of Marduk to Babylon 9

H. S. Versnel
Religious projection: A Hellenistic instance 25

Giovanni Casadio
Mani versus Mazdak: The prophet and his king in pre-Islamic Iran 41

Jordan Paper
Religious transformations and socio-political change: A western eurocentric paradigm? 61

Eastern Europe

Leonid J. Smolyakov
The intelligentsia between secular and religious culture 75

Vladimir Zotz
Personal spiritual orientations and religiousness in (former) Soviet society 83

Dalibor Papoušek
John Paul II and Mikhail Gorbachev: The process of globalization in multidimensional comparison 97

Břetislav Horyna
The analogy of the *proportionalitas*: The coherence between socio-political development and the development of religion in the new socio-cultural reality of Czechoslovakia 109

Jan Szmyd
National history, culture and the process of religious change . . 117

Irén Lovász
Religion and revolution: A Hungarian pilgrimage in Rumania 127

Dimitry Mickulsky
Muslim fundamentalism in Soviet Central Asia: A social perspective 141

Janusz Danecki
The Muslims of Poland: A religious minority in transition . . . 149

Gary Lease
Delusion and illusion, false hopes and failed dreams: Religion, the churches and East Germany's 1989 "November revolution" 161

Peter Antes
Theology of liberation and the Protestant monastery of Loccum in Germany 177

Abrahim H. Khan
Opposition within affinity between religion and politics with reference to Golden Age Denmark and Brazil 189

Latin America

Elio Masferrer Kan
Religious transformations and social change in Latin America . 207

Irene S. Vasquez
In the beginning there were the Canaries ...: The forgotten purgatory en route to the new world 221

Sylvia Marcos
Missionary activity in Latin America: Confession manuals and indigenous eroticism 237

Pablo G. Wright
Iconography, intersubjectivity, and anthropological experience: A Toba shamanic tree 255

Ivan Strenski
Political culture, religious culture and sacrifice 293

Theoretical and methodological implications

Armin W. Geertz
Theories on tradition and change in sociology, anthropology, history, and the history of religions 323

Ugo Bianchi
Method, theory, and the subject matter 349

Jeppe Sinding Jensen
What sort of "reality" is religion? 357

Rosalind I. J. Hackett
The symbolics of power discourse among contemporary religious groups in West Africa 381

Donald Wiebe
Religious studies as a saving grace? From Goodenough to South Africa 411

Conclusion

E. Thomas Lawson
Methodological conceits and theoretical opportunities: Reflections on the level of analysis appropriate for explaining sociocultural phenomena 441

List of contributors 453

Index 455

Luther H. Martin

Introduction

Over a century ago, Fustel de Coulanges emphasized the intimate relations which existed in Greco-Roman antiquity between religious notions and socio-political relations (1979: 12). "At Rome, as well as at Sparta and Athens", he concluded, "the state and religion were so completely confounded, that it was impossible even to distinguish the one from the other" (1979: 167). Those practices, both discursive and non-discursive, that today we consider to be "religious" were not discrete but were embedded in socio-political structures and relations; they belonged to the *politeia*, the corpus of criteria that defined the relation of a citizen to the *polis*, or state (Herodotus 9.35; Thucydides 6.104). Specifically, these criteria included "adherence to the cult of the gods of the Polis, as well as military and economic service to the State and obedience to its laws" (Ehrenberg 1970: 852). Religion belonged, in other words, to the *res publica* or, in any case, should belong, as is exemplified, for example, in Euripides' "The Bacchae", his dramatization of the tragic consequences occasioned in ancient Thebes when Dionysian practice and state policy were perceived to be in conflict. A similar perception of the Bacchanalia in Rome resulted in its proscription by the Senate in 186 B.C. (Livy 39). Roman writers such as Polybius, Cicero, Livy, Seneca and Varro simply took it for granted that religion was in the service of politics and government (de Ste. Croix 1972: 69; 1981: 343). As late as the fourth century A.D., Symmachus, Prefect of Rome and one of the last influential defenders of traditional Roman religion, eloquently argued that when religion is slighted, the entire state suffers (Symmachus, *Relatio* 3. 15).

Perhaps the most explicit example of the intersection between religious and socio-political practice, however, is the Biblical account of the

Exodus. Whatever one concludes about its facticity, this story remains, as Michael Walzer has emphasized, "a paradigm of revolutionary politics" (1985: 7), that has been central to such diverse ideologies as Puritanism (e.g., Oliver Cromwell 1845, Pt. 8: 19, 34), Communism (e.g., Ernst Bloch 1972; Lincoln Steffans 1926), and liberation theology (e.g., Severino Croatto 1981)—that is, ideologies that have been so influential in those cultural areas upon which the papers in this volume are focused.

The account of the controversy that finally resulted in the deportation/liberation of the Hebrews from Egypt (Ex. 12: 31—32) can be read socially, as the charter for collective self-awareness as it developed among an increasingly prolific class of immigrant workers (Ex. 1: 7; 2: 13—14) that were despised and materially subjugated by the indigenous landowners (Ex. 1: 1—14) (the social meaning of revolution is emphasized by Arendt 1963: 14, 86). Or, it may be read economically, as the confrontation of those who controlled the means of production by those who produced the wealth (Ex. 5: 6—8) and who sought to reappropriate the surplus value that had been produced by their labor (Ex. 3: 21—22; 11: 2—3; 12: 35—36; Ps. 105: 37; (Simone—Sugarman 1986: 163). Or, it can be understood politically, as a struggle of those victimized, not by the market but by the state, the absolute power of the pharaoh (Ex. 1: 8; Walzer 1985: 30), who imposed "forced labor upon the male population for long and indefinite terms of service under degrading and brutal conditions" (Sarna 1986: 21).

Again, the story might be read theologically, as "the unfolding of...divine purpose in human affairs" (Ex. 6: 6—8; Anderson 1986: 52), or, from a history of religions perspective, as a tale of conflict between the Israelite deity of which Moses was the commissioned emissary (Ex. 3: 10) and the Egyptian pantheon of which the Pharaoh, as son of Amon-Re, was the incarnate representative (Ex. 12: 12; Sarna 1986: 65, 78—80).

All of these readings of the Exodus account are not only possible, but are, in fact, systemically related. To reduce such events to economic or political explanations is to neglect possible religious implications,

even as reductions of these events to "hierophany" neglect the rich economic and political conditions that are also constitutive of human societies. For despite the expression or description of these events in religious terms, there was in antiquity, as Cristiano Grottanelli reminds us, "no ideology other than what we call 'religion'" (1985: 15). Even for those modern societies in which a notion of religion has been formally differentiated from other social systems, understandings of religion as *sui generis*, whether formulated as the autonomy of subject matter or discipline, represent the franchised constructs of ideology or theology rather than analyses of real social practices.

A second problem raised by the theme under consideration is the theoretical problem of social change. Social scientists have often attributed conservative tendencies to religion—not always incorrectly, whereas they credit innovation to political strategy. But explanations of change cannot be limited to political initiatives, as the paradigm of the Exodus exemplifies; nor can conservatism be restricted to the religious, as is shown, for example, by the policies of Euripides' King Pentheus.

The theoretical problem of social innovation remains. Connoisseurs of French existentialist films will know that all revolutions are plotted by intellectuals in coffee houses. But a revolution plotted is not a revolution fomented. The unanswered question of revolutionary theory is how practice results from idea; how collective identity and practice is effected among a critical mass of a heterogenous, if not positively alienated, population. It is at this point of understanding collective identities and practice that analyses of the religious and the political intersect. The point is not whether a political or economic system might operate or function as a religious system, but that the confluence of two or more such systems constitute an almost irresistible locus of power, the recognition of which has characterized successful leaders from Alexander, Augustus and Constantine to those modern leaders who invoke religious power to reinforce their own political ends. Our task should not be to trivialize power by claiming an alleged religious function for the political, or a political function for the religious, but

to recognize, describe and produce an analytic of the formations and distributions of power that such confluences of systems have constructed, and continue to construct.

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Historical models

Barbara Nevling Porter

Gods' statues as a tool of Assyrian political policy: Esarhaddon's return of Marduk to Babylon[1]

Religion has played an important role in the political life of nations, sometimes acting as a conservative force and sometimes as a powerful force for change. To understand why religion and politics have so often been intertwined, even in the lives of ostensibly secular modern nation-states, it may be helpful to see the phenomenon in a broader historical perspective.

I propose here to discuss the interaction of religion and politics in ancient Assyria, a nation that lay in what is now northern Iraq and that ruled a large empire in the Middle East between the ninth and seventh centuries B.C. The topic I am going to address is how the Assyrian king Esarhaddon, ruling in the early seventh century B.C. in the heyday of the empire, used innovations in theology and religious ceremony to help create a more peaceful relationship between Assyria and the chronically rebellious state of Babylonia, to the south.

I should say at the outset that in emphasizing the political motivations for Esarhaddon's support of certain religious innovations, it is not my intention to discount the role his personal beliefs may have played in such decisions. The extent to which the king's own religious convictions are reflected in his public positions is almost impossible to assess. In royal inscriptions and even in letters, it is the public faces of the king which are presented to us. We see him as a private person only obliquely, through the comments of his advisors. Although we have almost no information about his private religious convictions, we have ample evidence of his public positions on what we would call

religious questions. There can be little doubt that his public support for the Marduk cult, which will concern us here, would have had important political repercussions in both Assyria and Babylonia, repercussions which no intelligent political leader could have overlooked. It is these political aspects of Esarhaddon's public theological positions that I wish to discuss here.

I should also say that I will be using the term "religion" here in a narrow sense, meaning the service and adoration of a god or gods reflected in forms of worship and in a system of beliefs. In addition, my discussion will focus not on the religious practices and beliefs of private individuals in Mesopotamia, about which we still know lamentably little, but rather on the practice and beliefs of the state religions of Assyria and Babylonia, whose rituals were performed by the king and by the personnel of the great city-temples, and whose theology was reflected in documents composed by both palace and temple scribes.

The incident I will focus on is Esarhaddon's repair of the captured cult statue of the Babylonian chief god Marduk and the return of that statue to its home in Babylon, a project which was the climax of Esarhaddon's program to reconcile Babylonia to Assyrian rule (Porter 1987).

Babylonian-Assyrian relations at the beginning of Esarhaddon's reign were tense. The Assyrians had conquered Babylonia and claimed political control over it almost fifty years earlier, but had found such control difficult to maintain. Although the two nations were closely related, sharing the same language, many of the same gods, and a nearly identical literary and technical tradition, the Babylonians had stubbornly resisted Assyrian rule, rebelling every few years only to be subdued yet again by the Assyrian army (Brinkman 1984). In the reign of Esarhaddon's father Sennacherib, this had culminated in an Assyrian siege on the revered city of Babylon itself, ending in massive destruction. In Sennacherib's words:

> The city and (its) houses, foundation and walls, I destroyed, I devastated, I burned with fire. The wall and outer wall, temples

> (and) gods, temple-tower of brick and earth, as many as there were, I razed and dumped them into the Araḫtu-Canal. Through the midst of that city I dug canals, I flooded its site with water, and the very foundations thereof I destroyed (Luckenbill 1924: 83–84, col. ii, 11.50b–53a.)

The city had suffered greatly, but the attack only briefly quelled Babylonian resistance. When Sennacherib's death was followed by yet another revolt in Babylonia, Esarhaddon abandoned his father's punitive policy, replacing it with an elaborate public relations program designed to win Babylonian support for his rule. He rebuilt Babylonian temples, performed Babylonian royal ritual, and presented himself in his inscriptions for Babylonia as a legitimately Babylonian ruler who was only incidentally king of Assyria as well.

The Babylonians responded. By the middle years of the reign, there had been occasional disturbances in Babylonia, but no further revolts. It remained, however, a dangerously fragile peace. The unity of the two nations depended on Babylonia's acceptance of Esarhaddon, who united in himself the separate royal traditions of the two nations. Esarhaddon, however, was chronically ill and was also about to lead a dangerous campaign into Egypt.[2] To create a firmer, less personal foundation for the unity of Assyria and Babylonia, Esarhaddon now hit upon the idea of restoring the statue of the god Marduk, head of the Babylonian pantheon and divine representative of Babylon and the Babylonian people. The statue was available to Esarhaddon for restoration because it had been carried off by Sennacherib's troops after the fall of Babylon along with statues of other Babylonian gods and was still being held in Assyria.[3] On the simplest political level, Esarhaddon's proposal that these statues be restored in Assyria and returned to Babylon would certainly win him good will from the Babylonians and strengthen their support for his rule. But he had something more complex in mind, whose complexity lay in the symbolic overtones of this apparently straightforward undertaking. Esarhaddon's plan was that the statues be restored in the temple workshops of the god Ashur,

head of the Assyrian pantheon.[4] To describe this restoration, Esarhaddon's inscriptions use the verb *walādu*, "to give birth", a verb often used in this period to describe statue making. Esarhaddon's text thus says that the statues were to be "born" in Ashur's workshops, but adds that by being "born" there, the statues of Marduk and his fellow gods would become Ashur's children, born in his house. By this ingenious extension of the metaphor, the Babylonian gods were to be given impeccably Assyrian genealogies and a permanent place in the Assyrian pantheon. In one fell swoop, the pantheons of the two nations would be merged at the highest level. Marduk was especially honored; the text gives him the title *aplu rēštû*, or 'first heir', of his new father Ashur, in essence assigning him the position of second-in-command. Marduk, the god whose worship united the cities of Babylonia, would now be transformed into a god at once Babylonian and Assyrian, an emblem of the new unity Esarhaddon was working to produce in the political sphere.

It was a radical theological and political revision, potentially controversial in both nations. Although the Babylonians would certainly welcome the statue's return and the resumption of full religious life and divine protection which that entailed, they would scarcely be enthusiastic about the appropriation of Marduk as an Assyrian god—a somewhat subordinate one, at that. And while the Assyrians had long worshipped Marduk to a limited extent as a god of light and of healing, they had shown signs of rejecting the worship of Marduk in Assyria as their conflicts with Babylonia intensified. Tensions about the worship of Marduk are evident, for example, in the "Ordeal of Marduk" texts, found in two Assyrian cities, which reinterpret a list of ritual actions associated with the Marduk cult as incidents in which Marduk is captured, tortured, and mocked (Livingstone 1986: 205—251 and 1989: 82—91; Frymer—Kensky 1983). Another set of Assyrian texts inserts the god Ashur's name into the Babylonian creation myth, the central myth of Marduk's cult, transforming it into a story in which Ashur performs the feats usually attributed to Marduk, in effect erasing Marduk's greatest achievements as a god by transferring them to his

Assyrian counterpart (Luckenbill 1921–22). Esarhaddon's father Sennacherib even commissioned a set of temple carvings depicting Ashur in this role, evidence of powerful royal support in his reign for the resistance to Marduk's worship in Assyria (Luckenbill 1924: 139–142).

To win acceptance from either Assyrians or Babylonians, Esarhaddon's proposal to rehabilitate Marduk's statue, and by so doing to transform Marduk into a god as Assyrian as he was Babylonian, would require careful presentation to both groups. The texts which describe the project are thus models of tactful writing. The best preserved of the texts begins with a listing of both Assyrian and Babylonian gods who are said to have named Esarhaddon for kingship, as if to suggest divine approval from all sides for the king's activities.

After summarizing the king's achievements, including temple building projects in both Assyria and Babylonia, the text reports that early in the reign favorable omens, such as spectacularly bright appearances of the planet Jupiter and unusually abundant rains, had appeared in both countries, expressing the gods' approval of Esarhaddon and urging him to renew gods' statues, a formulation designed to distance the king from the controversial decision he was about to announce in the text. To further transfer responsibility for the project from the king to the gods, the text then quotes a surprising prayer in which the king expresses his reservations about the project. "For whom, great gods," he prays, "is the making of gods and goddesses? You are sending me to a place where entry is forbidden, to a difficult work. The work of renewing, is it for mankind, who does not hear or see, who does not know himself or the length of his own days?" Nevertheless, Esarhaddon concludes, "Whatever is in your hearts, let it be done" (Assur-Babylon A, Borger 1956: rs. ll. 14–15 and 17a).[5] With the king thus absolved of all responsibility, the text at last turns to the assembling of workmen and raw materials in preparation for the actual rebuilding of the statues.

Lest Assyrians be offended by the proposed attentions to Babylonian gods, the text adds here an elaborate account of the construction of a crown for the god Ashur:

> A cunningly made crown, emblem of the rule [of] Ashur, king of the gods, my lord, I caused to be made of red gold and precious stones, and I returned it to its place. That crown — dressed in light, adorned with dignity, possessed of glittering brightness, clothed with light — greatly pleased Ashur, the great lord; his heart was contented and his face glowed (Assur-Babylon A, Borger 1956: rs. ll. 32b–34).

With this concession to Assyrian interests completed, the text at last describes the reconstruction of the statues:

> Bēl (another name for Marduk), Bēltiya (his consort), Bēlet-Bābili, Ea and Madānu, the great gods, in the midst of (Ashur's temple) Esharra, house of their father, were truly born, and their forms were comely. With red *ṣāriru*, product of Arallu, dust of its mountains, I made their forms lordly. With lofty ornament and precious jewels I adorned their necks (Assur-Babylon A, Borger 1956: rs. ll. 35–37b).

The elaborate description seems intended to distract attention from the crucial phrase, but it is there nonetheless: the Babylonian gods have been "truly born" in Assyria, and Ashur is now their father.

Shortly after this, the text turns to other matters and then breaks off, but a second document describing the same events provides the sequel: as the climax of the project, Marduk and his colleagues will be returned in grand procession to Babylon (Assur-Babylon E, Borger 1956: ll. 86–89). This ceremonial return is described in rich detail, as if to underline its importance:

> Out of the midst of Eḫursaggalkurkurra [another name for Ashur's temple] they have now taken the road for Shuanna [that is, Babylon], a path of splendor, just as (the sungod) Shamash goes out glowing to the land. From Baltil [a section of the city of Ashur] as far as the [quay] of Babylon, piles of brushwood were lit every one-third of a double-mile; every double-mile they slaughtered a fattened ox, and I, Esarhaddon, took the hand of

> his great godhead and [walked?] before him. Into the midst of Babylon, the city of their honor, joyfully I had them enter (Assur-Babylon A, Borger 1956: rs. ll. 17b–21a).

The text breaks off here, but with the story essentially complete: Marduk and his fellow gods would return to Babylon in honor under the patronage of the Assyrian king.

Who was the audience for the elaborate message of these texts, and how would that message have been presented to them? The colophon of the longer text tells us that it was intended for public display as an inscription on a stele – whether for Assyria or Babylonia, it does not say.[6] The text which provides the sequel was inscribed on an alabaster tablet found in the god Ashur's temple in Assyria, and was thus probably meant for an Assyrian audience (Porter 1987: 366, item #159). A third account was probably meant for Babylonians, since it was to be inscribed on the pedestal of Marduk's statue, almost certainly in his temple in Babylon (Assur-Babylon F Borger 1956: ll. 89–90). These last two texts would be accessible only to a very small group, those with access to the temples of Ashur or Marduk who had, in addition, enough scribal training to permit them to read the texts, a group which could have included priests and administrators of the two temples and perhaps the professional healers and exorcists associated with the temple. Even the stele, although accessible to a broader audience, again could only deliver its message to people who could read, such as upper-level bureaucrats or independent scribes, or to people who employed scribes, such as members of the royal family, high army officers, or members of wealthy merchant or land-owning families. In addition, the texts might have reached a larger group of non-readers if, as seems likely, these (or similar) texts were read aloud as scripts for the ceremonies marking the statues' departure from Ashur or their arrival in Babylon. Even here, the main audience probably consisted once again of members of the elite, since there were then no public address systems to carry the spoken message beyond those standing close enough to the statues to hear the reader. The careful presentation of Marduk's

restoration and return in the texts we have been looking at was thus intended for a small but politically powerful audience which included members of the power elite of both states.

The project was also presented to a second, much larger, audience non-verbally through the elaborate procession in which Marduk's statue made its way toward Babylon, a procession which was in a sense a dramatization of Esarhaddon's policy to unite Assyria and Babylonia peacefully. The ritual activity of the procession was particularly appropriate for the presentation of a controversial policy, since the non-verbal nature of ritual lessens occasions for disagreement (Kertzer 1988: 13–14, 67–70). Like a Fourth of July parade, the procession did not demand that participants and observers assent to a particular political position, but only invited them to be present – and by being present, to be drawn in. As the statue and its entourage wound their way south along the Tigris River, the procession encouraged first Assyrians, and then Babylonians, to be drawn into a common activity united around the figure of the god Marduk, as they watched the elaborate procession pass and observed the sacrifice of the oxen. The procession made Marduk's return, and the Assyrian king's approval of it, dramatically apparent to a wide audience. The procession itself was a kind of symbolic thread, linking Assyria to Babylonia with a line of fires and sacrifices, making the river road once again an avenue uniting the two states, no longer an avenue of destruction down which the Assyrian armies poured.

Significantly, this thread ran from north to south. Marduk was returning under the patronage of an Assyrian king, and the procession, as it passed by, was an expression of Assyrian dominance as well as of reconciliation and reunion. This was the ritual aspect of the project, aimed at audiences in both nations and at every social class.

It is intriguing to discover that this part of the project initially backfired. Instead of creating a wave of community feeling, the procession seems to have nearly set off a revolt in Babylonia. In Assyria, the procession of the statues had advanced smoothly, but as it crossed into Babylonian territory and reached the city of Labbanat, a strange

incident occurred that is reported in a letter written to Esarhaddon by three of his officials, who were accompanying the statue (Parpola 1970: 18–19, #29; 1983: 32–35). According to this letter, two men, members of the household of a crown prince, stood beside a powerful stallion wearing special Ethiopian harness, preparing to enter the city – perhaps the stallion drawing the chariot in which Marduk's statue customarily rode. With the help of his partner, one of the two men then mounted the horse. The authorities promptly seized and arrested him, whereupon he stated, "The gods Bēl (i. e., Marduk) (and) Zarpānītu (his consort) have sent word to me: Babylon will be... the loot of Kurigalzi," the latter being the name of a long-dead Babylonian king. This statement, which seems mysterious to us, was evidently both clear and disturbing to the Assyrians accompanying the statue. They apparently halted the procession and, as we know, wrote to the king for instructions, adding in their report to him that an informant had subsequently told them, "I know; those [trait]ors are waiting [in the city of D]ūr-Kurigalzi." Simo Parpola has suggested that the statement of the man who mounted the horse was understood by the Assyrian officials on the scene as an oracle, foretelling trouble in Babylon if the statue continued on its way. But I suspect that the incident was in fact an attempt to provoke an uprising, rallying the Babylonians behind the figure of their returning god. The Assyrian officials' swift arrest of the man suggests this, as does the comment about traitors waiting farther along the road. If this interpretation of the incident is correct, the Babylonians involved in the incident were in effect rejecting Esarhaddon's proposal that Marduk should be seen now as a partly Assyrian god; they were instead fiercely reclaiming him as the focal point of Babylonian nationalist feeling.[7]

Esarhaddon's response to all this was evidently to order the return of Marduk's statue to Assyria, where we know that it remained until the following year.[8] Whatever Esarhaddon's texts might say about Marduk's Assyrian connections, the god's statue was still too volatile an emblem of Babylonian national identity to be allowed on Babylonian soil until the Babylonians had a little more time to grow resigned to

Assyrian rule. Esarhaddon himself died within the year, but in the following spring, his son and successor Ashurbanipal completed the project at last, returning Marduk to Babylon with full ceremony. As before, there was no sign in Assyria of any resistance to the project of returning Marduk to Babylon as a legitimately Assyrian god, while the Babylonians, on their part, seem this time to have quietly accepted Marduk's ceremonial return and the idea of Assyrian rule which it implied. The peace between the two nations, begun in Esarhaddon's reign, lasted with only minor disruptions for twenty-eight years, a remarkable achievement after generations of bitter warfare, and a tribute in part to Esarhaddon's effective use of religion as a force for political change.

What is most striking about the entire incident, I think, is that throughout this incident, Esarhaddon's new Babylonian policy was presented entirely in theological terms. "Marduk is the son of Ashur": there is no other explicit public formulation of Esarhaddon's Babylonian policy. The theological reform carries the political reform encapsulated within it.

The theological expression of what we would now call a political policy may strike us as strange, but in an Assyrian context it was perfectly natural. There was a close connection in Mesopotamia between political and religious thought. In analyzing the Babylonian creation myth, for example, Thorkild Jacobsen argues that the myth is not only a discussion of the origins of the universe and of how the gods imposed order upon it, but is also a presentation of political theory, arguing the divine origins of the monarchical form of government (Jacobsen 1976: 167–191, esp. 183). It was not uncommon in Mesopotamia that a myth should serve as the vehicle for this kind of theoretical discussion (Frankfort, *et al.* 1946: 14–15). This was particularly true of political theory, since Mesopotamian gods not only represented powers in nature, but came in time to represent the cities or countries where their worship was centered, as well. As local and national gods, in Jacobsen's words, "they became, of course, unavoidably drawn into political conflicts as partisans," their fortunes identified with the political fortunes of their

communities (Jacobsen 1976: 232). When cities fell, Assyrian inscriptions often attributed that fall to the action of gods. An inscription of the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal, for example, describes his defeat of the Elamites not only in terms of the human achievements of his army but also by saying, "The terrible splendor of (the gods) Ashur and Ishtar overwhelmed Elam, and they bowed to my yoke" (Luckenbill 1927: 333, par. 863b). Because Mesopotamian gods, Ashur and Marduk in particular, were seen as actively involved in political and military events, mythology, which served in Mesopotamia as a formal language for discussion of abstract ideas, served also as one of the traditional languages for formal, public statements about political life – a language which nevertheless continued to have its full religious implications.

For the Assyrians, the idea of a separation of church and state – much less of religion and politics – would have been incomprehensible. For them, all aspects of life, political as well as natural, were understood in terms of a single explanatory model, conceived in terms of the interactions of gods. The return of Marduk and its role in Esarhaddon's Babylonian policy offers us a glimpse of a world in which religion and politics were not separate spheres, but functioned together as the single, integrated sphere in which public life took place.

What we sometimes lose sight of is that this explanatory model – that a god or gods control the outcome of political and military events – is still very much alive even in modern secular nation-states, functioning alongside a second explanatory model, the so-called scientific model, which posits that events in the world reflect the operation of impersonal forces acting according to natural laws, such as cause and effect – a closed system in which divine beings do not intervene. As modern historians, we usually attempt to explain historical events in terms of this latter impersonal model. In times of crisis, however, it becomes clear that our society is curiously ambiguous about which explanatory model it prefers for explaining political and military events. At the end of the recent war in the Middle East, for example, President Bush of the United States issued a proclamation of thanksgiving, in which he urged Americans to "give thanks to our Heavenly Father,

our help and shield, for his mercy and protection," and added, "we prayed for a swift and decisive victory and for the safety of our troops. Clearly the United States and our coalition partners have been blessed with both. We thank the Lord for his favor" (*Civil liberties* 373 [1991]: 10). Bush was here invoking as self-evident a conceptual model in which political and military affairs are ultimately controlled by the direct intervention of a god or gods — a model with which Esarhaddon would have felt quite at home. The incident serves to remind us that while the so-called scientific model now dominates the analytical thinking of modern post-Enlightenment societies, the ancient Mesopotamian model of a universe controlled by a god or rival gods has never been entirely replaced and has never lost its political power. In times of crisis, it is often this model which is called upon, still serving as one of the most powerful unifying forces political leaders have to conjure with.

Notes

1. Earlier versions of this argument were presented in papers read at Brandeis University in January 1989, and at the annual meetings of the Association of Ancient Historians held at Brown University on May 5—6, 1989. The reactions of colleagues on those two occasions have been of great help in refining the argument. I am particularly indebted to Robert C. Hunt, Christoph F. Konrad, and Martin Ostwald for their suggestions. I am equally grateful to my colleagues at the present conference, particularly Jeppe S. Jensen, Janusz Danecki, Gary Lease, H. S. Versnel and Donald Wiebe for both perceptive criticism and encouragement. I owe particular thanks to my husband, Michael H. Porter, whose thoughtful comments at every stage of this paper have been, as always, invaluable. Whatever errors remain are of course my own.
2. For a brief synopsis of the evidence for these events, see Parpola 1983: 428—429. In 672 B. C., just before the second Egyptian campaign, the king

had moreover appointed not one, but two, sons to succeed him, one to rule as high king in Assyria, the other to rule as subordinate king in Babylonia. The motivation for this decision is unclear, although it may have been influenced both by political pressure and by the practical difficulties of ruling Babylonia from a distance; whatever the reason, however, this arrangement for the succession would effectively split the kingship of the two lands once again after Esarhaddon's death, making the creation of a new foundation for the unity of the two states imperative. For further discussion, see Porter 1987: 272–276.

3. There is some debate on this point since Sennacherib speaks of having smashed gods of Babylon, while Esarhaddon clearly states that he was involved in renewing (*tēdištu*) existing statues of Babylonian gods (Landsberger 1965: 20). The actual circumstances of the statues, however, are less important here than the fact that Esarhaddon was clearly asserting the survival of the original statues and making use of that (alleged) survival.
4. His inscriptions report that this was the site selected by divination from three possible choices, two in Assyria and one in Babylonia. If so, the theological interpretation attached to the plan, which depended on the restoration occurring in the god Ashur's temple, was probably developed after the site had been selected.
5. Assur-Babylon A presented in transliteration and German translation in Borger 1956: 79–85. The translations of Esarhaddon inscriptions here are my own, based on the Akkadian texts as established by Borger.
6. Assur-Babylon A colophon, Borger 1956: l. 86: "From the left-hand stele, first extract." The text survives in two copies, both inscribed on clay tablets found in the Assyrian capital at Nineveh. As such, they could be either texts intended for use in Assyria or administrative records of texts intended for use elsewhere.
7. In contrast to the Spanish conquistadors, discussed in Sylvia Marcos's paper in this volume, who were attempting to impose their own ethnocentric view of the world on the Indians of the so-called New World, the Assyrians were not attempting to impose a different cultural system on the Babylonians; Assyrians and Babylonians were working within essentially the same cultural system and speaking with the same cultural idioms. What is occurring here is a struggle for control of a single conceptual model or master fiction. The one major difference between the two systems was that Marduk headed the Babylonian system, while Ashur headed the Assyrian one. The growing

importance of Marduk within the Assyrian system had been attacked by some Assyrians, as we have seen, in texts such as the Assyrian version of the Babylonian creation myth, presumably because Marduk's growing prominence in Assyria seemed to those Assyrians to threaten the dominance of the Assyrian version of the master fiction, which affirmed the superiority of Assyria within the world. Esarhaddon, in contrast, chose not to attack Marduk, but to use him to affirm the dominance of Assyria — rewriting the Assyrian master fiction to include Marduk in a subordinate position. The procession, which dramatized this rewriting, with all its religious and political implications, was thus vigorously rejected by the Babylonians who tried in this incident to recapture the figure of Marduk for Babylonia alone.

8. According to Parpola's reconstruction of the chronology of these events (1983: 430), the statue of Marduk departed for Babylon on May 6, 669 B.C. This date, however, is somewhat uncertain, depending on the interpretation of a badly fragmented Esarhaddon inscription, Assur C (Borger 1956: 7—8), which may not, in fact, refer to these events. The inscriptions describing the return, however, include references to the Egyptian campaign of 671, suggesting that in any case the attempted return of the statue should be placed in the final two years of Esarhaddon's reign. The usually reliable Babylonian Chronicles place Esarhaddon's death on November 1, 669 B.C. and the successful return of Marduk's statue to Babylon in May of the following year (11. 30—36, Grayson 1975: 86). The Julian calendar equivalents of these dates also are those of Parpola 1983: 430.

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H. S. Versnel

Religious projection: A Hellenistic instance

1. Introduction

Around 540 B.C. the Ionian philosopher Xenophanes wrote the following: "If cows and lions had hands and could make drawings or create works of art like men do, horses would make images of gods similar to horses, and cows similar to cows, and they would lend them an appearance like their own." And, in order to make himself perfectly clear, he also said: "It was Homer and Hesiod who attributed to the Gods all blame and blemish that mark mankind: theft, adultery, and deceit." Xenophanes did not draw the conclusion that gods did not exist, but he professed the existence of one God, immaterial and unimaginable, the Great Mind (*nous*). His views, very revolutionary in that period, made him the father of the notion of "religious projection" as it was formulated 2400 years later by Feuerbach.

Although the issue of religious projection seems to be anathema in modern scholarly discussion, there is a fascination with questions of, first, how and how far social and mental conditions of a particular culture affect the imagery of the divine world and, secondly, to what extent modes of human communication may reflect themselves in attitudes vis-a-vis the gods. Obviously, periods of radical social, political or cultural change offer the best opportunity for comparison and research. If one wishes an illustration it suffices to observe the current substitution of competitive and hierarchic predicates such as "almighty", "father" or "king", by "horizontal" and "soft" qualities such as, for instance, "fellow-sufferer" in the evolution of the Christian God. How-

ever, these processes are often complicated and, by the very nature of their subject, cannot be consistent. Many modern theologians who are designing a suffering and indeed helpless God, continue to expect a final liberation from misery and pain from His hands. Homer could picture the Olympian divine family as a typically aristocratic society, with Zeus as the *anax* in the center, enjoying festive banquets dowsed with wine and, by contrast, he could even make the gods suffer from bleeding wounds in combat. But at the same time he also knew of different types of divine food — nectar and ambrosia — and of the specific nature of the divine blood which warranted immortality. Gods could bleed, but not to death. It is precisely the study of similar inconsistencies that may give us a deeper insight into belief systems and religious representations.

My present purpose is to argue that in a particular period of ancient history, namely the Hellenistic age, developments took place which betray so close a parallelism between secular and religious representations and attitudes, that it cannot be accidental: without doubt cultural changes have directly affected religious language and imagery. I shall first give a brief description of the general socio-political development I have in mind and then present four concrete cases that have all been taken from various research projects with which I have been concerned during the last ten years. I thought this conference might be a good opportunity to collect some results and view them in the light of our central issue "religious transformations and socio-political change." I must emphasize, though, that this is a preliminary sketch of what I hope to substantiate in a more elaborate investigation in the near future. What I offer are suggestions rather than theses (let alone theory). For this reason I have completely refrained from adding footnotes, restricting my references in the text almost exclusively to those of my works which may provisionally provide further information.

The Hellenistic period, from Alexander the Great to the reign of the emperor Augustus (or, rather, well into the imperial period), is marked by a number of radical changes as compared to the classical period that preceded it. The classical polis culture had to adapt itself

to the emergence of vast world empires. To be sure, this did *not* mean the end of the Greek cities nor of their political ideology of democracy and autonomy, but they had to accept subjection to a new system of autocratic rulership, for one of the undisputed characteristics of Hellenistic culture is the emergence of monocratic, absolute rulership. In the same period, we observe in the cities a ubiquitous tendency towards oligarchy, property instead of citizenship gradually becoming the central requirement for political participation. All this was accompanied by fundamental changes in the forms of social expression, in the rhetorics of social communication, and in the idiom of authority and hierarchy. It is especially here that I descry a marked parallelism between the construction of human society, on the one hand, and the imagery of the divine world on the other.

2. Judicial prayer

I begin by quoting parts of a text from a lead tablet found on the Greek isle of Amorgos. It is dated from the first century B.C. to the second century A.D. by different scholars.

> Lady Demeter, O Queen, as your suppliant, your slave, I fall at your feet (*Kyria Dēmēter, basilissa, hiketēs sou prospiptō de ho doulos sou*). Lady Demeter, this is what I have been through. Being bereft by a certain Epaphroditos, I seek refuge in You: be merciful to me and grant me my rights (*epi se katapheugō sou eugilatou tychein kai poisai me tou dikaiou tychein*). Grant that the man who has treated me thus shall have no satisfaction either in rest or in motion. [There follows an extensive curse formula.] Lady Demeter, I supplicate you because I have suffered injustice: hear me, O goddess, and pass a just sentence (*litaneuō se pathōn adika, epakouson, thea, kai krinai to dikaion*). (...) O Queen, hear us who

> suffer and punish those who rejoice in our misery (*epakouson hēmin pathousi, kolasai tous hēmas toioutous hēdeōs blepontes*).

At first sight there is little cause for excitement. A person has been wronged by another person and he invokes a goddess for help and revenge. However, the degree of excitement depends on the novelty or peculiarity of an experience. And if we compare this little prayer with the entire evidence from earlier periods (both the archaic and the classical ages from the eighth to the third century B.C.), it is a peculiar and novel piece of evidence indeed. For from this earlier period we have not *one* document that is at all comparable with our text. What we do have, of course, is a great number of literary prayers, including many prayers for help, but rarely if ever as a judicial complaint and request for juridical assistance, as is explicitly presented in our text.

Beginning with the Hellenistic period, however, and especially in the imperial age, prayers like the one at issue proliferate. I have recently collected, discussed, and baptized them "judicial prayers" or "prayers for justice" (Versnel 1991). The god invoked is consistently addressed as a superior judge, who has the power to detect every sin, give justice to the wronged and persecute the culprits. I do not say that gods as protectors of justice are lacking in earlier periods — far from it: think of Homer and especially Hesiod, for instance — but we simply do not find similar *formal and ceremonious* prayers for justice as reactions to concrete experiences from daily life.

One particular element in this prayer strikes the eye: the hierarchical atmosphere that marks both attitude and terminology. The goddess is invoked as Queen (*basilissa*) and as Lady (*Kyria*) whereas the mortal is pictured as a slave and suppliant, who, in a definitely servile manner, implores the goddess to do justice. All this, especially the latter feature, is generally foreign to the religious expression of classical Greek prayer. Before returning to this difference in religious mentality, I shall cite a document which betrays a remarkable similarity with our little prayer.

> King Ptolemaios (*basileu*) I am being wronged (*adikoumai*) by NN. [There follows a series of offences.] So I beg and beseech

> you, King (*deomai oun sou kai hiketeuō, basileu*) not to suffer me to be wronged by NN. For I hope that having sought your protection as a suppliant (*hiketēs epi se kataphygōn*) I shall obtain justice (*tou dikaiou teuxomai*).

Here we have an example of a so-called *enteuxis*, a petition on papyrus to a king or high magistrate, of which we have numerous specimens in Greek papyri from Egypt for the whole period during which Greek was the official language there. The relationship with our prayer to Demeter cited above is immediately obvious. As a matter of fact, the Demeter prayer is nothing else than an *enteuxis*, addressed this time, however, not to a mortal king, magistrate or the emperor, but to a goddess. It is one of the most direct and unmistakable instances of "religious projection" I know.

Once we have noticed the sudden appearance of secular *enteuxis* formulas in Hellenistic prayers for help, we can also attempt to explain the absence of this particular form of prayer in earlier periods. In the classical period of Athens, to which we owe more than ninety-percent of our total written information, democracy prevailed and monarchy — especially in the form of tyranny — was anathema; moreover, justice was *not* in the hands of all-powerful judges (as it was in the Hellenistic and Roman periods) but in that of a jury. The typical *enteuxis* formula must have been unimaginable in this situation, either in human communication, or — in consequence — in negotiations with the gods. So here we have a first clear indication that changes in human society could have grave consequences for the gods as well. As a corollary of the transference of human judicial codes to the language of prayer, the gods acquired (some of) the qualities that characterize the human sovereign. And this is only one aspect of a far more complex evolution of which we will now discuss a few other exponents.

3. The development of the "prayer of gratitude"

In older collections of ancient prayer it has sometimes been observed that the ancient world, including Old Testament culture, seems to lack the prayer of gratitude. As a matter of fact, words expressing gratitude or recognition are practically absent from prayer in classical Greece. In a study of Greek and Roman prayer (Versnel 1981), I have argued that this absence is less amazing than it may seem at first sight since the very same phenomenon can be observed in human communication. In the numerous official decrees expressing gratitude to a benefactor, we seldom, if ever, find terms like Greek *charis*, *charizesthai*, etc., which express "thanks". What we do find, both in prayer and in expressions of gratitude addressed to mortals, are terms of *praise*: "You have shown your benefactions and for that reason we praise and extol you", is the summary of stereotyped formulas. The very same phenomenon can be observed in the Old Testament and generally in ancient Near Eastern prayer. The Christian *laus Deo* is a direct derivative from this.

Again we are confronted with an unmistakable instance of the projection of forms of communication between men upon those between men and gods, this time already in the classical period of Greece. My point, however, is that with the radical social and political changes in the early Hellenistic period, *both* types of expression undergo development. On the human side, we see the honorary decrees that are addressed to powerful and rich benefactors, more especially to kings, swell up into extended and baroque, if not sycophantic accumulations of the great qualities of the human patrons. Kings, for instance, are praised (already from the fourth century B.C.) with long series of adulatory predicates. They are praised for being: virtuous, humane, righteous, clement, prudent, concerned, benevolent, fair, mild etc., in endless variety. The height of these expressions is reached in the imperial period from which the majority of our inscriptions comes, especially the rich harvest from Asia Minor. But there are sufficient earlier

examples from the Hellenistic period to warrant the conclusion that this is the period in which this development really began.

As to the relationship between men and gods, we find an analogous evolution. The epigraphical votive texts in praise of (that is, in gratitude to) a god from archaic and classical times are practically without exception very concise, memorializing the divine intervention and adding (if at all) only a few words of praise, sometimes asking (in addition) for another benefaction. Even the literary hymns from that period, which often list the miraculous deeds of the god, do not abound in extended enumerations of the gods' qualities. In the Hellenistic period, however, this changes. In addition to the short votive texts, which, of course, continue to appear (as they still do today), a new type of praise comes into fashion, the *aretalogy*, the record of the *aretai* ('miracles' or 'miraculous features') of the god. They were especially popular in the cult of Isis and Sarapis, where an Egyptian influence may be perceived, but also other gods are praised with these ample litanies. And, here, just as in the enumerations of human honors, we find extended lists of the benefactions and great qualities of the gods. The most complete is the Isis aretalogy from Kyme in Asia Minor which comprises some 50 lines, each of which acclaims one of the goddess's great founding acts. In order to give the reader an impression and because I shall have to return to some details of this hymn in the next section, I quote the full text of this aretalogy (trans., Grant 1953: 131–133). Compared to the praises of kings and benefactors mentioned above, it shows both the extent *and* the limits of assimilation between human and divine praise. Both generally owe their publication to a concrete act of assistance or rescue: the liberation of, or the spending of large amounts of money for a city, on the human side; a cure from a disease or rescue from a dangerous situation, on the divine. But naturally human benefactors cannot be praised far beyond the positive qualities mentioned above. The great foundation acts of nature and culture, as they appear in the aretalogies, are reserved to the gods, although Roman and Byzantine emperors went a long way in assimilating themselves with the gods also in this respect. If there are clear analogies here, they should be

sought first and foremost in the common inclination to extol the benefactor with long lists of qualities that raise him above other human or divine beings.

4. The Isis aretalogy from Kyme

I am Isis, the mistress of every land, and I was taught by Hermes, and with Hermes I devised letters, both the sacred [hieroglyphs] and the demotic, that all things might not be written with the same [letters].
I gave and ordained laws for men, which no one is able to change.
I am eldest daughter of Kronos.
I am wife and sister of King Osiris.
I am she who findeth fruit for men.
I am mother of King Horus.
I am she that riseth in the Dog Star.
I am she that is called goddess by women.
For me was the city of Bubastis built.
I divided the earth from the heaven.
I showed the paths of the stars.
I ordered the course of the sun and the moon.
I devised business in the sea.
I made strong the right.
I brought together woman and man.
I appointed to women to bring their infants to birth in the tenth month.
I ordained that parents should be loved by children.
I laid punishment upon those disposed without natural affection toward their parents.
I made with my brother Osiris an end to the eating of men.

I revealed mysteries unto men.
I taught [men] to honor images of the gods.
I consecrated the precincts of the gods.
I broke down the governments of tyrants.
I made an end to murders.
I compelled women to be loved by men.
I made the right to be stronger than gold and silver.
I ordained that the true should be thought good.
I devised marriage contracts.
I assigned to Greeks and barbarians their languages.
I made the beautiful and the shameful to be distinguished by nature.
I ordained that nothing should be more feared than an oath.
I have delivered the plotter of evil against other men into the hands of the one he plotted against.
I established penalties for those who practice injustice.
I decreed mercy to suppliants.
I protect [or honor] righteous guards.
With me the right prevails.
I am the Queen of rivers and winds and seas.
No one is held in honor without my knowing it.
I am the Queen of war.
I am the Queen of the thunderbolt.
I stir up the sea and I calm it.
I am in the rays of the sun.
I inspect the courses of the sun.
Whatever I please, this too shall come to an end.
With me everything is reasonable.
I set free those in bonds.
I am the Queen of seamanship.
I make navigable unnavigable when it pleases me.
I created the walls of cities.
I am called the Lawgiver.
I brought up islands out of the depths into the light.

I am Lord of rainstorms.
I overcome Fate.
Fate harkens to me.
Hail, O Egypt, that nourished me!

5. Liberation and subjection

I have recently discussed a curious paradox in the prototypical Isis aretalogy from Kyme (Versnel 1990). Its earliest Greek model must date from the third century B.C. Among the long list of qualities two lines attract our attention. In the opening line the goddess says: "I am the tyrant (*tyrannos*) of all the land." Some twenty lines further she boasts: "I have destroyed the mastery of tyrants" (again the term *tyrannoi*). There is a stark paradox here, which as the reader may note, has been conveniently smoothed away in the translation that I have quoted. In the first line, the meaning of *tyrannos* must be positive, denoting a unique position of sovereignty and majesty. The second time it is negative, denoting bad ruler, usurpator. Instead of glossing over this inconsistency I have tried to show that it reflects a fundamental characteristic of Hellenistic political ideology, namely the ambivalent attitude regarding notions of freedom and subjection. On the one hand, the ancient democratic aversion to tyranny was maintained in the early Hellenistic period. Tyrants should be eliminated and ever since Alexander the Great new rulers claimed to have given freedom to a city or cities by expelling an earlier ruler, who, of course, had been a tyrant. This, then, is accurately reflected in line 25 of our aretalogy now transposed to a goddess. But there is also a reverse of the medal. For after dispelling the bad tyrant, and indeed in reward for this act of liberation, the new ruler was immediately acclaimed, lauded and extolled as a superior, unsurpassable, and absolute sovereign and master. And he received honors in accordance with his unique position. In fact, as

we observed earlier, the Hellenistic period is marked by the emergence of autocratic rulership, kings being referred to as *kyrios* (that is 'master') and even acquiring divine qualities. This absolute sovereignty, again transposed to the goddess, is precisely expressed in the first lines of our aretalogy.

The result is a stark ambiguity: although Hellenistic kings granted freedom by deposing tyrants, they subjugated the freed subjects into a new kind of slavery in the same act, thus becoming tyrants themselves — this time of course in the positive sense of the term. The relevance to our issue is that this ambiguity reflects itself with great precision in the government of the gods, as our aretalogy exemplarily demonstrates. And it is scarcely necessary to underline what a great future this ambiguity was to have in religious thought, for instance in the Christian theology of the apostle Paul, who, on one hand, calls himself a "slave of Christ" and, on the other, proclaims that "Christ has made us free". In 1 Cor. 7:22, the inconsistency is even unequivocally spelled out: "For he that is called in the Lord, being a slave (*doulos*), is the Lord's freeman; likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's slave."

However, the paradox is no less dominant in pagan ideas of deity during the early imperial period. In the final lines of the aretalogy Isis boasts: "I overcome Fate, Fate harkens to me." Like Kyrios Jesus, Queen Isis overcomes the cruel and awful tyrants of the Hellenistic and imperial periods: *heimarmenē*— (destiny, fate), or *tychē* (willful *fortuna*), and receives the greatest reward imaginable: sycophantic adoration by those she frees, who become, in turn, her slaves. The author Apuleius (second century A.D.) makes an Isis priest say: "accept of your own free will the yoke of service. For when you have begun to serve the goddess, then you will better realize the results of your freedom." And as I hope to have shown, this is a metaphor, as it were, of the ambivalent relationship between kings and cities in the Hellenistic period.

6. Heis

The subject of my book *Ter unus* (1990) is the religious phenomenon that we call "henotheism". In a Latin inscription Isis is addressed as *una quae es omnia*, 'you who alone are all'. Henotheism denotes a personal devotion to *one* (Gk: *heis*) god, without necessarily involving the rejection or neglect of other gods. This modern term is derived from the ancient acclamation *heis (ho) theos* (literally: 'one is [the] god'), that can be found in endless repetition in inscriptions, papyri, engraved in rings and amulets, etc. The bulk of the material was collected by E. Peterson, and many new testimonies have been published since. The expression means something like: 'unique or uniquely great is the god', or rather, 'is *our* or *my* god', for the acclamation is used in a clearly competitive vein for such rivals as Sarapis, Helios, Mithras, and Jesus. This time it is not possible to discover *literal* terminological models in the sphere of human communication, though we do find the acclamation *heis* addressed to mortals in later literature. It is tempting to assume Egyptian influence here, but this temptation is frustrated by the fact that the first known testimony of *heis* in this "elative" sense is found in the fourth century B.C. in Greece: *heis Dionysos*, being used as a kind of password to an esoteric cult.

However, the phenomenon is no *generatio spontanea*. Already from the fifth century B.C. we know proverbial expressions praising persons who have done remarkable feats, for instance, in war, sport or politics. They are often acclaimed as *monos kai prōtos*, 'first and only', and, indeed, these expressions are so common that various authors made puns on them. Apparently, Greeks, already in the classical period but increasingly in Hellenistic and Roman times (Romans had the same expression: *primus et solus*), praised a human being by emphasizing his "uniqueness" as embodied in his superiority. And it needs no further substantiation that the emergence of the unique and superior individual is one of the most characteristic phenomena of the Hellenistic period. After the examples of analogy presented in the first three sections of

this paper, I cannot believe that it is only by chance that we see the very same development in the divine world, where in the same period some gods take pride of place among and above others (alternately being called *heis* and *monos*) and thus lay claim to an adoration which, besides henotheism, has been sometimes labelled "affective monotheism".

7. Conclusion

We have seen four concrete instances of direct and sometimes literal projection of forms of human communication onto forms of contact with the gods, and we have traced this parallelism in the process of changes during the Hellenistic period. There are many questions which can and should now be put forward but I have neither the time nor the intention to discuss or even mention them at the present occasion. For the moment I would single out two inferences that to my mind deserve further consideration. One is of general purport, the other regards the interpretation of some focal changes in the Hellenistic period.

1. My four examples have above all demonstrated the basic importance of rhetoric for the process of what I called "religious projection". In all four instances, it is first and foremost rhetorical expressions that were transposed upon the communication with gods. Of course, in the minds of the believers these gods must already have possessed the potential status and stature necessary to bear the burden of the new qualifications. All the same, the expressions must have considerably contributed to the *shaping* of this new status: by being addressed in terms reserved for exceptional individuals, benefactors and kings, the gods (*some* gods, that is) acquired a unique position among and above their fellow-gods which they had never had before. The formulations borrowed from human social expression inevitably presented the divine

addressees with their implied unique qualities. This gives me the courage to suggest that generally in dealing with phenomena of religious projection we should pay more attention to the possible contributions of social linguistics, to the rhetoric of social and political relationships.

2. The traditional view of Hellenistic civilization is that Greek culture was deeply influenced and transformed by Oriental elements, both on the human socio-political side and on the religious one. Absolute rulership, and especially the emergence of ruler cult, were attributed to Oriental models. Accordingly, in this view, the new picture of absolute, autocratic and henotheistic gods had its roots in Oriental religions. Curiously, the socio-political and the religious developments generally have been distinguished from each other and kept apart.

Now with regard to the first idea, it has long been observed that the emergence of both autocracy and ruler cult had its roots in an internally Greek evolution that can be discerned already in, or even before, the fourth century B.C. And for the second, it has been shown that, for some elements in the divine sphere as well as on the human level, the option of an internally Greek evolution (side by side with obvious Oriental influences) should be seriously considered (Pleket 1981; van Straten 1974). The insights gained from the samples of religious projection presented above may help us to construct a more differentiated view of the Hellenistic period in both the social and the religious sphere, and how the one may have influenced the other.

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Giovanni Casadio

Mani versus Mazdak: The prophet and his king in pre-Islamic Iran

1. Mani and Shahpuhr

Persian Kings of the Sasanian house (224–652 A.D.) had, no doubt, a quite different temperament from that of a Saint Louis. Despite this obvious fact, when Mani, the prophet of a religion focussed on dualistic and gnostic principles and advocating strict asceticism, was received at the court of the *Shahanshah* ('King of kings') Shahpuhr (240–272 A.D.), the latter was deeply and favorably impressed by Mani's charismatic appearance and became well-disposed towards him and his religion.

According to a Manichaean tradition preserved by al-Nadim (trans. Dodge 1970: 775), Shahpuhr admitted Mani in audience for the first time on the day of his coronation (242 or 243 A.D.). The first meeting was probably unsympathetic, so Mani travelled on to India. On his way back to Persia, he converted two brothers of Shahpuhr's, Mihrshah (lord of Mesene) (M 47 I, Parthian, *apud* Asmussen 1975: 20) and Peroz (lord of Khorasan), who eventually arranged a successful encounter between Mani and the King of kings.

> When Mani came into his presence there were on his two shoulders what resembled two lamps of light. When Shahpuhr beheld him, he exalted him and he was magnified in his eyes. He had originally expected to assault and kill him, but when he encountered him he felt in awe of him and was well disposed towards him. Then he asked him why he had come, and promised that

> he should return to an audience with him. So Mani asked for a number of requirements, among which there were that Shahpuhr should show favour to Mani's companions in the provinces and the rest of the kingdom, and that they should have the right to travel wherever they might desire throughout the land. Shahpuhr granted him all that he requested..."[1]

From other sources,[2] we learn that Mani spent a number of years in the *comitatus* ('entourage') of Shahpuhr and even accompanied the King of kings on his campaigns against the Roman empire. The Arabian historian al-Ya'qubi supplements data whose reliability is difficult to assess though their main purport finds some parallel in a Coptic document from Fayum. In his *Historiae*, al-Ya'qubi writes that during the audience, Mani

> Shahpuhrs Religion rügte und ihn zum Dualismus zu bekehren suchte, *was auch gelang*, so dass er instand gesetzt wurde, den Untertanen des Königs zu predigen und sie auf seine Seite zu ziehen.[3]
>
> 'censured Shahpuhr's religion and sought to convert him to dualism, *which he succeeded in doing*, enabling him to preach to the king's subjects and win them to his point of view' [editor's translation].

Whether the King of kings was a real and sincere Manichaean convert, we do not know.[4] To be sure, the prophet managed to win royal sympathy since the first years of Shahpuhr's reign and to obtain a number of privileges for himself and his community.

The question naturally arises why an oriental despot so full of pride and greed (and definitely in a position to give vent to his urges) should have been sympathetic to a religion whose profession simply was: "We do not eat flesh nor drink wine, from women we keep far away" (M 2, Middle Persian, *apud* Asmussen 1975: 22). Various responses have been given to this crucial question. To summarize, according to the views of the "Swedish school",[5] Shahpuhr's conduct was dictated by a

Machiavellian reasoning since he found in Mani's nonconformist system of religious tenets the most appropriate and updated response to the religious demands of the peoples of his empire. On the other hand, as other Manichaean scholars have recently put forward, it was rather the prophet Mani who played Machiavelli in this drama by taking advantage of his role at the Sasanian court with a view to promoting his missionary activities.[6]

If we consider carefully the particular nature of Manichaean preaching and especially the duplicity of the Manichaean moral code — one law for the *electi* and another one for the *auditores* — it is not too venturesome to assume that *both* the king *and* the priest knew what cards were up the other's sleeve, and each of them tried to take advantage of the situation to achieve their respective goals.

2. Mani and Vahrahm

Whatever the reason for his conversion, Shahpuhr gave the prophet an opportunity to spread his new creed freely within the Persian empire for thirty years. At his death (272 A.D.), Mani's situation changed radically for the worse. After the insignificant reign of Hormizd, the new Shahanshah Vahrahm (273—276 or 274—277 A.D.), "prince avide de jouissance et peu énergique", 'a prince greedy for pleasure and very indolent' [editor's translation] (Christensen 1944: 197), did not seem to share his father's enthusiasm for the "Doctor of Babylon." Manichaean sources (Coptic and Iranian) relate the events leading up to Mani's end. We hear of a visit to the royal court in the city of Ctesiphon on the Tigris. After a majestic entrance and a humbled leaving from the royal gate he resignedly left the initiative to his most bitter adversaries, the Zoroastrian magians. "Thereupon Kartir the *Mobad* plotted with his friends who served before the king" (T II D 163 = M 6031, Parthian,

apud Asmussen 1975: 55). The outcome of this alliance between the court and church hierarchy was not long to be awaited. After a threatening series of measures designed to hinder Mani's missionary activity, the defeated prophet was summoned to the royal palace in Susania (the town of Gondeshahpur = Belabad).

> The king was at his dinner-table and had not yet washed his hands. The courtiers entered and said: "Mani has come and is standing at the door." And the king sent the Lord the message: "Wait a moment until I can come to you myself." And the Lord again sat down to one side of the guard (and waited there) until the king should have finished his meal, when he was to go hunting. And he stood up from his meal; and, putting one arm round the queen of the Sakas and the other round Kartir, the son of Ardavan, he came to the Lord. And his first words to the Lord were: "You are not welcome." And the Lord replied: "Why? What wrong have I done?" The king said: "I have sworn on oath not to let you come to this land!" And in anger he spoke thus to the Lord: "Ah, what need of you, since you go neither fighting nor hunting? But perhaps you are needed for this doctoring and this physicking? And you don't do even that!" [According to Coptic sources Mani had failed to heal the king's sister]. And the Lord replied thus: "I have done you no evil. Always I have done good to you and your family". (M 3, Middle Persian, *apud* Asmussen 1975: 54–55).

The king then shifted his anger to theological (or rather religio-political) matters: "For three years you are going with [sub-king] Bat [of Armenia]. Which is the divine law you taught him so that he abandoned our law and adopted yours? Why did you not stay with him, and why did you not come together with him, as I had given order to you?" Finally, Vahrahm (who considered himself, as a Sasanian king, a next of kin of Ohrmazd) asked the crucial question. "How did it come about that God has revealed this to *you*? Why did God not reveal it to *Us* who are master over this whole country?" When Mani replied that God had power to act as he thought fit, the hour of his doom struck (Coptic

Manichäische Homilien, 47, 22–25, Engl. trans. Hinz 1971: 491). After this stormy interview, as is well known, he was fettered and thrown into jail, where he died under the relentless strain of heavy, cruel shackles (276 or 277 A.D.). Arabian sources add that a theological dispute took place in public between Mani and the *mobadan mobad* (Zoroastrian high priest: Kartir?) and that recourse to the ordeal of "molten lead" was also suggested but let drop (Ya'qubi, *Historia*, ed. Houtsma, 181–182, *apud* Christensen 1944: 197). This tradition, seemingly legendary, may very well be based on a gist of historical truth.[7]

Middle Persian and Coptic texts provide a telling account of the atmosphere expected to permeate a colloquy between the champion of a deviant, nonconformist faith and a despot who supports an established church. That being so, what circumstances may have intervened between Mani's first encounter with king Shahpuhr (so promising) and his last encounter with king Vahrahm (so disastrous) — circumstances able to produce such contrary effects? Surely, a sweeping shift occurred in the religious policy of the Persian empire following the death of the first Shahpuhr. Probably, there was more than one concomitant motivation behind this irreversible political shift.[8] The first impulse certainly came from the Zoroastrian clergy — the *mobads* and *herbads* — who spared no effort to secure their privileges, threatened by the crushing force of the new-born messianic religion; and they were eager to carry out their own counter-reformation under the inflexible and ruthless sway of the chief *mobad*, Kartir.[9] Shahanshah Vahrahm I, though not an ardent Zoroastrian (unlike his son and successor Vahrahm II [276–293 A.D.]), was not lukewarm in setting the throne on the side of the altar. By choosing Zoroastrianism rather than Manichaeism, the Sasanian emperor made perhaps empire-wide orthodoxy more difficult to achieve, "since Manichaeism with its cross-cultural and cross-religious integrative synthesis was in a sense more logically able to have achieved this than the by then (in effect) Iranian Zoroastrianism" (Scott 1989: 457).[10] But, in fact, Mani's gnostic religion was not enough "at home in the world" to meet the converging requirements of the guardians of the *status quo* in the Persian empire at the end of the third

century A.D., namely: the supreme ruler, the magicians and the blue-blooded magnates of the empire. "La force de ces puissantes couches sociales était basée sur la terre, l'économie de l'état étant essentiellement agricole", 'The strength of these powerful social classes was based on the land, the economy of the state being essentially agricultural' [editor's translation] (Gnoli 1985: 80). And, as a matter of fact, these three social entities owned the whole of the agricultural lands in the empire. What kind of response might a religious preaching which damned as a bitter crime the tilling of the soil have found in the hearts of the large landowners, who *inter alia* were not supposed to have propensity for monastic life?

This rejection of Manichaeism by Vahrahm I was, of course, very reasonable in *that* historical situation, with *that* ruler in charge of supreme power. To demonstrate the fallacy of any inference based on the schemes of a mechanical determinism, we should not disregard the events that were to occur five centuries later among the Uigurs, a Turkish tribe of Central Asia that was to adopt Manichaeism as their state-religion (in a very different socio-economical condition indeed).

3. Mazdak and Kavad

About two hundred and twenty years after Mani's martyrdom, another prophet – both a Zoroastrian reformer and a crypto-Manichaean[11] – visited the Sasanian court: his name was Mazdak, son of Bamdad. At that time the King of kings was Kavad, son of the vanquished king Peroz, a prominent figure in Persian Medieval history (488 to 497 and 499 to 531 A.D.). The encounter between these two personages proved momentous for the king, the prophet and the whole people of Iran. All the Arabian historians who wrote on the Sasanian empire were deeply impressed by the events that succeeded during Kavad's long reign, preceding and following Jamasp's interregnum (497–499 A.D.).

"After king Kavad had reigned for 10 years," says Tabari, the most informative of these historians:

> the chief Mobad and the nobility decided to force his resignation and place him in prison. The reason for this was king Kavad's association with a man named Mazdak and his followers, who proclaimed that what God had given to man should be distributed equally and that men had abused this in their injustice to one another. To rectify this injustice, Mazdak and the Mazdakites told the people that the wealth of the rich should be taken away and given to the poor, returning to the dispossessed their deserved share. Their reasoning was based on the concept that the rich had no greater moral right to money, women and other possessions than the poor. Obviously appealing to the mob, they gathered around Mazdak and championed his teachings. Those not adhering to the teachings of Mazdak were, naturally, deeply disturbed and worried because the Mazdakites were becoming so powerful that they were able to enter anyone's house and take it away along with his wife and belongings. No one was able to check these activities of the Mazdakites. With such power, the Mazdakites were able to force king Kavad to agree with them, threatening him at the same moment with forceful abdication (*Kitab al-Akhbar* ['Book of facts', i. e., 'History'], I, 885–886, trans. Gaube 1982: 111).[12]

The evidence of the *Shahnameh* ('Book of the kings') by Firdausi, which in matter and manner seems quite close to the original middle-Persian source (the *Khvatai-namak*, or 'Book of the sovereigns', the semi-official royal Sasanian annals) is no less dramatic: "And a man came whose name was Mazdak, a man eloquent, wise, intelligent and ambitious. He was a remarkable man and a wisdommonger; and the valiant Kavad gave ear to him. He became *dastur* ('minister') to the sovereign; guardian of the treasure he became, the treasurer." In the presence of the heir apparent, prince Khusrau, Mazdak preached to the sovereign his fundamental social doctrine: "Five things make us turn from righteousness:

namely Wrath, Hatred, Envy, Need, and, fifth, being conquered by Greed (or Concupiscence: *Az*, the female demon who was also the bugbear of Zoroastrians and Manichaeans)" (trans. from the Italian version, Bausani 1959: 120 [Moscow edition, VIII, 45]). And to substantiate this metaphysical intuition he declares:

> From women and property spring these five *devs* ('demons') who have harassed the good Religion (*Din* = *pahl. Den*) in the world. The riches of the world ought to be equalized (or: made common); wherefore the rich sought an excess of property? Gratuitously are to be given women, abode and possessions, equal are the poor and the rich in right. I equalize (or: make common) possessions in order that the sacred Religion should become pure, and the truth distinct from untruth" (Bausani 1959: 120, and Shaki 1978: 299; French paraphrase, Christensen 1925: 52 [Moscow edition, VIII, 46]).

One is led to assume that in Mazdak's view of the world the Ahrimanian demons of Darkness included the personification of moral vices, as is the case in the religions of Zoroaster and Mani. They were to be held back and neutralized by removing competition over women and property. Mazdakite teaching in this way involves communism, on the one hand, and heresy, on the other. The former posed a threat to the propertied class, the latter to the clergy of the Zoroastrian church which had become stagnant thanks to two centuries of government protection. Under these premises, how can we expect to find in a character such as the king — the guardian of Zoroastrian orthodoxy, but at the same time the chief landlord of the empire and virtually the master of all womenfolk[13] — a strong supporter and an active promoter of this social and religious upheaval? But in fact such was the case. According to the majority of the sources (Christensen 1925: 105), King Kavad went so far as to promulgate a law providing that Persians might "have communal intercourse with their women."[14] As in the case of Mani and King Shahpuhr, we are unable to divine how far political concern[15]

prevailed over genuine religious conviction.[16] It is not unlikely, however, that both motivations – the political and the religious – converged[17] to transform a medieval autocrat into a revolutionary utopian of a sort competing with the socialist-anarchist Fourier.[18]

An uncommon adventure that Kavad experienced in his early life may have contributed to his conversion. We know from the quasi-contemporary *Chronicle* by Joshua the Stylite that, following the defeat of his father Peroz, the young prince Kavad had spent two years (484–486 A.D.) as hostage among the White Huns or Hephthalites (on the same occasion the Khan of these bellicose nomads had married Kavad's sister) (Christensen 1925: 5–6; Klima 1957: 126). When in 497, at the time of his expulsion from Persia, he sought refuge among his former fellow men, he also married his niece, the daughter of the Hephthalite king. This tribe of Huns[19] was actually organized as a semi-nomadic society enjoying "relative independence and equality of its members" (Boyce 1979: 131). Moreover, we hear from a Buddhist source that they practiced polyandry (cf. Grousset 1969: 114 and Minns 1913: 93), a peculiar form of marriage which seems to have been endemic in their country[20] and which in its actual practice appears scarcely to differ from communal ownership of women. Thus, it does not seem too venturesome to suggest that this juvenile experience represented for the Persian king the imprinting of an outlook on social life which Mazdak's teaching was later to reinforce so powerfully in him.

4. Mazdak and Khusrau

The alliance between a gnostic prophet and a utopian and revivalist king caused a gigantic turmoil in the stagnant Sasanian society, in which bonds of kinship, customs of inheritance and (male) sexual needs were regulated by ancestral laws. Under the umbrella of religious tradition (the *Videvdat*), these laws secured the privileges of the royal house, the

aristocracy and the clergy over the other classes and, at another macrostructural level, of men collectively over women.[21] It may be doubted that this state of sexual and economic anarchy which lasted several years — before Kavad's overthrow (497 A.D.) and after his reestablishment (499 A.D.) — resulted in an effective improvement of women's social status.[22] During the revolutionary period of Mazdak's influence at the court, however, women — with the other goods — were forcibly removed from the harems of the lords and redistributed among the common people. The resulting promiscuity and, above all, its confusing effect on the line of descent and succession, is symptomatically reflected in the accusation against the Mazdakites by conservative orthodox Zoroastrians: "They reckon lineage through the mother; they believe in wolfishness, that is to say, they do a thing wolfishly: their gratification of sexual desire is like that of a wolf whose progeny is reckoned through the mother. They also recognize lineage through the mother".[23] In this statement, which seems to present "das Merkmal der Altertumlichkeit und Geschichtlichkeit", 'the mark of antiquity and authenticity' [editor's translation] (Sundermann 1988: 183; see Shaki 1978: 289 and 297), we can in all probability recognize the most socially subversive trait of the Mazdakite revolution and perhaps the very reason for its failure. The magicians — guardians of the social order (sanctioned by the religious code of the *Avesta*), one of whose mainstays was the patrilineal and patriarchal system (cf. Molé 1960–61: 25; Shaki 1978: 303; and notably Sundermann 1988: 186) — entered into an alliance with the wealthy aristocrats whose estates and harems were threatened, and together they succeeded in winning Prince Khusrau, Kavad's son and heir presumptive, over to their side. The political effect of this *Sainte-Alliance* was not long to be awaited. Khusrau, threatened as he was in his succession rights by his elder brother, Kaus, who had been converted to Mazdakism, had good reason for detesting Mazdak and his doctrine. He therefore convinced his father to arrange a theological conference with the participation of the chief Zoroastrian *mobad*s and even of the Christian bishop of Persia. In virtually the same scenario which had witnessed Mani's collapse, Mazdak was summoned to the

king's presence (Christensen 1925: 124—125; Klima 1957: 249—269; Bausani 1959: 125—126; Molé 1960—61: 21—23). The sources give a variety of accounts (some of them contradictory) of the doctrinal controversy that took place between Mani and the *mobad*s in 528—529 A.D. (Christensen, *et al.*; 524 A.D. according to Klima 1957: 295 and followed by Bausani 1959: 125). Amid a multitude of romantic embellishments, one incontrovertible fact emerges: the gnostic agitprop, Mazdak, came off the worse and was convicted as a heretic and an offender of the *mazda-yasna* religion. He was executed and many of his followers were also slaughtered.

The obvious consequence on everyday life was that most of the "liberated" or "redistributed" women found their way back into the palaces of the rich and noble. Historians have been busily demonstrating that women's status was at any rate improved by the social and juridical reforms promoted by Khusrau the wise (cf. Klima 1957: 280—282). Surely, everyone knows how magnificent the condition of woman became after the Arabian conquest and after the more or less spontaneous conversion of the Persians to Islam! The effects of this intercultural clash between Arabs and Persians and of this interreligious clash between Islam and Zoroastrianism are in some way still evident in the present day. In 1986, an Iranian journalist reported the stoning, in a village in Iran, of a woman by her husband with the help of his fellow-villagers. She had been, in fact, lent to another man as a servant for housekeeping (sexual performances not included) in observance of the old Persian custom. But she was unjustly accused of infidelity and was consequently brought to trial and finally stoned to death in conformity with the no less traditional Semitic custom which Muhammad had converted into religious law (cf. *Il giornale*, 1 August 1991, 3).

In a certain sense, this episode exemplifies for modern Iran the legacy of Mazdak's "religion of peace and happiness...and justice" (Yarshater 1983: 1005, 1019), nay, it testifies to the failure of the Mazdakite utopia.

Notes

1. *The Fihrist*, trans. Dodge 1970: 776. Cf. Flügel 1969: 85, with comments, 170—174. See also *Kephalaia* (ed. Polotsky—Böhlig 1940), I, 15. 30—33; *A Manichaean psalm-book* (ed. Allberry 1938), CCXLI, 43. 5—6; *Manichäische Homilien* (ed. Polotsky 1934), 48. 2—9 (Engl. trans. in Ort 1967: 216).
2. *Kephalaia* (ed. Polotsky—Böhlig 1940), I, 15. 33—16. 2; Alexander Lycopolitanus, *Contra Manichaei opiniones disputatio* 2. 4. 21—22 (ed. Brinkmann 1989). Cf. Puech 1949: 46—47 with the relevant notes; Widengren 1961: 42—46; Ort 1967: 218; Asmussen 1975: 17; Tardieu 1981: 29—30; Lieu 1985: 59.
3. Ed. Houtsma 1883: 180, cited in Nyberg 1938: 483, n. 3 (referring to 413). Cf. Christiansen 1944: 197.
4. There is no lack of evidence about the conversion of several representatives of high classes in Sasanian empire: see recently Klimkeit 1989: 20.
5. Nyberg daringly claims that the Persian king "hat ernstlich erwogen, Manis Religion zum offiziellen Glauben seines Reiches zu machen", 'had seriously considered establishing Mani's religion as the official faith of his kingdom', and maintains that Shahpuhr acted "als Politiker", 'as a politician' [editor's translation], with no personal engagement, but looking to the increasing syncretistic tendencies of his empire (1938: 413). Wikander supports this view with new arguments: "Diese neue Lehre vom Standpunkt der damaligen Iranier als ein geeignetes Mittel erscheinen konnte, die alte Volksreligion auf ein höheres Niveau zu heben und ihr neue Lebenskraft einzuhauchen" (1946: 206—207). 'This new teaching could appear from the Iranian point of view of the time as an appropriate means for elevating traditional popular religion to a higher level and for inculcating a new vitality' [editor's translation]. Widengren resolutely advances the same line: "By propagating a syncretistic religion Mani is able to offer the Sasanian king of kings a religion well suited to be acceptable both to his Iranian and Mesopotamian subjects. The *basic thoughts* in his religious system are *Iranian*, but the *language* is that of the Mesopotamian *Gnostic* with *Christian* sympathies" (1946: 179). (To be sure, these statements should be reversed, as is historically ascertainable). This orientation is shared with some caution by Puech 1949: 39 and 47, and by Gnoli 1985: 77—78. Widengren elaborates

his view of Manichaeism as a religion most apt to carry out "una più alta sintesi", 'a greater synthesis' [editor's translation] between two conflicting religious trends, the Christian and the Iranian; even so, he is of the opinion that the Sasanian king felt a genuine attraction for Mani's religious options (1961: 42—46).

6. Lieu rejects the foregoing speculations on the ground that Shahpuhr professed himself a champion of Zoroastrianism, and he assumes that the relationship between Mani and the monarch "was that of patron and client rather than king and prophet" (1985: 59). Cf. also Scott: Mani was hoping to bring about a "kingship" that would be sympathetic and thus supportive of his "own particular views" (1989: 456). On the king's religious (*viz.* Zoroastrian) commitment, see also Boyce 1979: 113.
7. For more details and a list of sources about Mani's last days, see Puech 1949: 50—51, with notes 203, 206, 207; Widengren 1961: 52—55; Ort 1967: 219—224; and especially Hinz 1971: 485—492 and Tardieu 1981: 37—39 (both somewhat fanciful).
8. Here follows the foci of scholarly debate. Nyberg: "Lebhaftes Intrigenspiel am Hof mit den Magiern", 'spirited intrigue with the magicians at court' and "dynastische Rücksichten", 'dynastic considerations' or rather, "persönliche Ungunst seitens des Königs?", 'personal disfavor on the part of the king?' [editor's translation] (1938: 414). W. B. Henning (1942), *apud* Ort 1967: 223 (*contra*), and Tardieu 1981: 37 (*pro*): fear of political upheavals as a consequence of Mani's proselytism among client kings in the Persian empire. Wikander: "Der König war jetzt am besten mit einer rein nationalen Priesterschaft bedient, die niemals dem Verdacht, ausländische Beziehungen zu haben, ausgesetzt war" (1946: 208). 'The king was now served at best by a completely national priesthood that was never exposed to the suspicion of foreign influence' [editor's translation]. Puech: "C'est à une coalition des pouvoirs religieux et politiques...que le Réformateur a succombé", 'The reformer succumbed to a coalition of religious and political powers' [editor's translation] (1949: 50). Widengren: "Un'alleanza nell'ambiente di corte fra interessi religiosi e interessi politico-militari", 'An alliance within the circle of the court between religious and politico-military interests' [editor's translation] (1961: 52). Ort: "Mani is imprisoned on account of his activities as the founder of a new religion," no political aspects being involved (1967: 222—223). Hinz: the high priest Kartir is the architect of Mani's disaster: "the priest won, the prophet lost" (1971: 492 and *passim*). Lieu: Mani

would have been considered a dangerous heretic by Kartir, who was planning to reform the Zoroastrian religion in the very opposite direction; and his religion, so eager to carry out a converting activity, must have appeared to political power as "a divisive factor" in the ethnic kaleidoscope of the Persian empire (1985: 79). Gnoli: "Les causes de la victoire des *mobad* sur Mani doivent être cherchées dans la situation sociale et politique particulière en train de se consolider dans l'état iranien du III[e] siècle", 'The causes of the *mobad*'s victory over Mani must be sought within the particular social and political situation that was taking root in the Iranian state in the third century' [editor's translation] (1985: 79–80). Scott: "At a political level it may be argued that Manichaeism's basically world-rejecting stance made it an inappropriate alternative for Sasanian rulers hoping to rally religious and political support behind them" (1989: 457).

9. See especially the perceptive, sympathetic if venturesome, account by Hinz 1971: 492–499 (with the somewhat ironic remarks by Duchesne-Guillemin and Frye).
10. Gnoli also stresses that Manichaeism "interprétait mieux que ne le faisait le nouveau mazdéisme des *mobad* et des *herbad* les tendances et aspirations les plus répandues et les plus profondes de la religiosité de l'époque", 'interpreted better than did the new Mazdaism of the *mobad* and the *herbad* the most prevalent and profound tendencies of the religiosity of the time' [editor's translation] (1985: 78).
11. On the ground of various similarities in religious teaching, the majority of the older scholars considered Mazdak a Manichaean and his religion nothing but a reform of Manichaeism: cf. Christensen 1925: 100–103; Bausani 1959: 120; Widengren 1965: 342; Gaube 1982: 121. More recently, some specialists have laid stress on the fact that according to Middle Persian texts, Mazdak always presented himself as a reformer of Zoroastrianism: cf. Molé 1960–61: 17–28; Shaki 1978: 300; Morony 1991: 941. In my opinion, it is sounder to leave the door open to the possibility of an influence of both religions (Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism in the Iranian variant with its pretension of being a reform of Zoroastrianism itself): cf. Guidi 1936: 501; Gnoli 1987: 302. And above all one should emphasize those characters which bring Mazdakism unmistakably within the orbit of the gnostic and syncretistic faiths: cf. Altheim: 1953 (emphasis on the neo-Platonic model); Klima 1957: 205–214 (emphasis on gnostic roots, esp. Carpocratian);

Pugliese Carratelli 1972 (emphasis on Plato and Carpocrates; but Bundo's role is unduly overrated: cf. Arrigoni 1982); Yarshater 1983: 998 and 1008.

12. The story is narrated with a great variety of details but with no essential change in a number of Arabic, Persian, Syriac and Byzantine sources. The generality of the Christian sources do not mention the prophet Mazdak and ascribe the communistic reform to a king's personal initiative (Procopius, Agathias and other Greek historians, the *Chronicle* by Joshua the Stylite [Syriac], the *Chronicle of Seert* [Arabic, by a Nestorian]). For a critical comparison of the sources, Christensen is still fundamental (1925: 5—89); see, more recently, Klima 1957: 131—154; Pugliese Carratelli 1972: 66—80; and Gaube 1982 (hypercritical).
13. How many women were in an imperial harem? According to Tabari the last great Sasanian, Khusrau II, had at his disposal about 12,000 women and girls (Klima 1957: 104). From a Manichaean parable we learn of a practice which was customary in the land: "And the poor man fosters the beauty of that girl, his daughter, for she is very beautiful. And that beautiful daughter he [adorns?] and presents to the king; and the king approves of the girl; and he himself takes her to wife..." (M 221, Middle Persian, *apud* Asmussen 1975: 36).
14. Procopius, *History of the Wars* 1. 5. 1. The attempts to attenuate the purport of this statement (e.g., Klima 1957: 239; Bausani 1959: 125) are unjustified (cf. Shaki 1978: 301—303).
15. Cf. Th. Nöldeke, *apud* Christensen: Kavad intended "den mächtigen Adel an seiner Familienehre, seinem Familienzusammenhang und seinem Besitz auf's empfindlichste [zu] schädigen", 'to injure severely the family honor of the powerful nobility, their family alliances and their possessions' [editor's translation] (1925: 107); for Klima, Kavad's aim was to cripple the peers of the realm, "indem er den Bedürfnissen des Volkes mit Verständnis entgegentrat" (1957: 238—239), 'while he met the needs of the people with understanding' [editor's translation]; for Bausani, there was "discordie dinastiche fra i nobili", 'dynastic quarreling within the nobility' and "tensione fra clero e casta guerriera", 'tensions between the clergy and the warrior caste' [editor's translation] (1959: 125); and according to Gaube, "The social unrest associated with Mazdak's communist teachings may simply have been a later cover-up of Kavad's mobilization of the mob against the nobility to destroy their power" (1982: 121).

16. For Christensen, Kavad was a sincere convert to Mazdakism (1925: 108–109); for Pugliese Carratelli, Kavad found in the Mazdakite doctrine "una giustificazione religiosa ed un pratico conforto alla sua esigenza di rinnovamento, sia ch'essa nascesse da una penetrante analisi dei problemi sociali e politici dell'impero, sia che rispondesse ad un intimo desiderio di giustizia", 'a religious justification and a practical support for his need for renewal, whether deriving from a penetrating analysis of the social and political problems of the empire, or whether to fulfill an intimate desire for justice' [editor's translation]; (Pugliese Carratelli 1972: 75–76; cf. Widengren 1965: 342).
17. So Morony: "Kubadh doit très vraisemblablement avoir été animé par une combinaison d'intérêts politiques et de croyances religieuses", 'Kubadh must very likely have been animated by a combination of political interests and religious beliefs' [editor's translation] (1991: 942).
18. In Iran of Islamic times (ninth-eleventh centuries), we find some evidence of the existence of two communes which, in the Fourier style, followed the social program and economic doctrine of the Mazdakites (cf. Yarshater 1983: 1023–1024).
19. "Une horde turco-mongole, en l'espèce, semble-t-il, plutôt mongole que turque", 'A Turkish-Mongol horde, in this case, it seems, more Mongol than Turkish' [editor's translation] (Grousset 1969: 110). However, "it is likely that these people represented the last wave of the Indo-Iranian migrations from Central Asia" (Gaube 1982: 115).
20. In the Achaemenian age a form of polygynous polyandry is ascribed by Herodotus (1. 216) to the Massagetes (or *Saka*), nomad Iranians (perhaps already mixed with peoples of Altaic stock) living on the northern border of Persia (Casadio 1991: 106–116).
21. On the social situation of Iran in late Sasanian times (with particular concern for "die Stellung der Frau", 'the place of women'), I refer to Klima 1957: 92–106, with the notes, 107–116. "In allgemeinen war das Weib rechtlich eine Sache, ein Object. Als Rechtsobject stand die Frau auf derselben Stufe wie der Sklave" (98), 'In general, a woman was legally considered to be a thing, an object. As an object, a woman occupied the same level as a slave' [editor's translation]. Particularly interesting are the institutions of *chakariha* or levirate-marriage (Yarshater 1983: 1000), of *sturi* or *sine manu mariti* marriage ('cohabitation with a woman without guardian and marital obligations') (Shaki 1978: 303, n. 136), of "Zwischenehe" ("Es war...eine Art

Ehescheidung und Verleihung der Frau einem anderen Manne, der eine weibliche Arbeitskraft brauchte"), 'an intermediary marriage state (It was...a kind of divorce and lending of a woman to another man who required women's work)' [editor's translation]) (Klima 1957: 109, n. 20).

22. Shaki is a skeptic in this regard (1978: 303); Yarshater is more positive (1983: 1000–1001, n. 3).
23. *Denkart*, B. VII, 653–654, ed. Madani (Bombay 1911), trans. Shaki 1978: 294–295. A basically similar version is given by Sundermann 1988: 184.

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Jordan Paper

Religious transformations and socio-political change: A western eurocentric paradigm?

1. Introduction

The thesis of this critique is simple: the separation of the religious from the economic, social, and political aspects of any given culture is not only a western European (including its post-colonial offshoots) ideological construct, but in the context of human history, a relatively recent one as well. Accordingly, from a cross-cultural perspective, one must ask whether the interrelationship between changes in religion and the socio-political context is a topic only relevant to modern western cultures or an example of western ideological imperialism?

Essential to the above thesis is the question of the meaning of "religion" itself, a topic so controversial that the tendency among religionists is to avoid the issue whenever possible. Nonetheless, in the context of the present discussion which revolves around the meaning of the term, it is an issue that cannot be entirely ignored.

Definitions of "religion" lie on a continuum with Christian theological models at one end and attempts at culture-free usages at the other. The continuum is skewed toward theological definitions because the term is not only a western one, but, although it has Roman roots, it is essentially a modern Christian one. There is no intention of rehearsing here the controversy; any of the histories of the history of religions (e.g., Sharpe 1986) would be adequate for such a review. It is but necessary to indicate that my use of the term avoids the Christian theologically influenced definitions (e.g., Tillich 1957 and Eliade 1959),

which forces cultures to be examined from a western model, and approximates the now virtually classic one of Geertz, which focuses on symbol systems that are at the root of a culture's self-understanding.

2. Cross-cultural issues

From the standpoint of cultural ecology (e.g., Sanders—Price 1968), no aspect of a culture can change without corresponding changes in every other. As cultures increase in complexity, all facets change in response to each other. To posit that the initial change is economic, social, political or religious, is ultimately a "chicken and egg" question. Pre-Columbian America, both North and South, presents a range of cultures from the least complex to the so-called "high civilizations." In all cases, the complexity of the religious aspect accords with all other cultural aspects, from the democratized (Lowie 1934) shamanism of egalitarian gathering-hunting cultures to the high deities of the Incan empire (Rowe 1960).

Major types of religions seem to be linked to cultural ecological considerations, limited by the possibilities of diffusion. Hence, shamanism has both a circumpolar distribution yet includes all of Native America. Although it is linked to the context of hunting (Hultkrantz 1965; 1966), all Native American cultures retained major elements of shamanism. Mediumism (or spirit possession) has been linked to horticulture in mixed-economy cultures (Paper forthcoming), where gardening is a female occupation, but it has yet to be identified in Native America, with its numerous horticulture-hunting and agrarian cultures.

In some cultures, such as China, religion and culture are coterminous to the degree that the earliest western chronicler, the Jesuit Matteo Ricci in the late sixteenth century, had to fabricate Chinese religions from his own ethnocentric perspectives: the "Three Religions" of China (Gernet 1985). His construct was so irrelevant to the Chinese situation

that it necessitated considering as superstition the preponderance of Chinese religious behavior that was excluded.

Religion in the usual western understanding can hardly be found in China. Priesthood as an occupational specialty developed only in response to foreign influence from the West, specifically India, and remained marginal. Priests are not found in the traditional state, clan and family interrelated religions, except in that the heads of family, clan, and state were functionally the respective chief priests. The protohistoric warrior-elite were not only ritual specialists, but also functioned as mediums for clan ancestral spirits (Paper, forthcoming). When institutionalized religions separate from the state, that is, Buddhism and Buddhist influenced Taoism, rivaled the state for political and economic power, they were challenged and lost the contest.

European religion suffered a similar fate in China. Ricci and his fellow Jesuits sought and attained state offices to missionize from within the elite socio-political-religious structure. When their accommodation to Chinese ritual was eventually rejected by the Papacy, Christianity was suppressed by the Chinese government. Synthesis with Western, i. e., Christian, culture has yet to be successful. The amalgamation of the Kuomintang (Nationalist Party) with a neo-Confucian/Methodist Christian synthesis never caught on, and Taiwan currently evidences a flourishing of traditional Chinese religion with democratization and prosperity. Although Marxism as a "Judaeo-Christian heresy" (Nichols 1956: 243) remains influential, Chinese communism was perhaps closer to neo-Confucian ideology, as Khrushchev well understood. Yet whenever the present government's constraints are removed, traditional Chinese religion resurges. Hence, how in China can religion and the socio-political context be separated so the mutual influences can be analyzed?

3. The separation of religion and state

When is the concept of religion as separate from the political realm first observed? Perhaps the first recorded statement is found in the New Testament: "And Jesus said to them, 'Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's'" (Mk. 12:17 [NASB]). But that statement was produced at a time when the world was expected to end in the impending future. When the Christian church replaced the western Roman state and the Second Coming was no longer assumed to be imminent, separation was no longer meaningful. In the Eastern Churches, church and state merged at the apex (caesaropapism) and so remained into the twentieth century.

It was in the Roman Church with the Renaissance that Christian culture first accepted the partial validity of a non-Christian worldview. Yet even while Greco-Roman culture was undergoing a romantic revival in the Italian city-states stimulated by Islamic learning, in Spain the state fostered the Inquisition to insure there was but a single culture, including religion, following the Christian conquest of Islam (and Jewish culture) in the Iberian peninsula. The Protestant Reformation was fostered by German and other princes and kings as a means to political independence, but no thought was given towards a non-Christian culture. The resulting wars were simultaneously political and religious.

Ironically, it was the Jesuit Relations from China, with its gross misrepresentation of three Chinese religions separate from an enlightened government ruled by secular philosophers, that stimulated the modern Western concept of religion as separable from government if not culture itself. Voltaire and Leibnitz were influenced by these Relations (Creel 1970; Mungello 1989) and in turn influenced both the American and French revolutionary theorists.

Among those so influenced, Thomas Jefferson and others inspired the principle of the separation of church and state in the formation of the United States of America. This development was stimulated by a

number of factors: 1) a break from English economic and political control necessitated a break from the Church of England, headed by the English monarch; 2) as the various states were aligned with competing versions of Christianity, union precluded a state church, and 3) intellectuals, such as Paine (and later Thoreau and Emerson), were moving towards a post-Christian religious understanding.

In France, for a different combination of reasons, the struggle against monarchy concurrently meant a struggle against the Church. With the Napoleonic conception of citizenship, non-Christians for the first time had an opportunity to participate in government and culture. Nationalism arose out of Christianity to create a religious understanding that was not identified as religion: "Roman Catholicism [was] replaced by a religion of nationalism or patriotism" (Nichols 1956: 118–119).

Nationalism reached its fullest development in the United States, although it is still understood by many religionists as but a quasi-religion, termed "civil religion" (Bellah 1967; Bellah–Hammond 1980). America fights its wars under the single banner of God and manifest destiny (Drinnon 1980). American Protestantism includes "free elections" as an essential religious ritual and fosters this ideology in all other countries. In the recent (1991) Crusades revisited, both sides claimed divine sponsorship to fight against Satan, Jerusalem replaced for both sides by petroleum, the literal lubricant of modern economies. Yet scholars can accept Islamic states as theocracies and deny the same for the non-Islamic Western nations.

Only in those modern Western cultures which explicitly separate religion from government does the opposition of "secular" and "religious" make sense. For only in the West did the priests lose the competition with warrior-rulers for socio-political authority, the Papal state now reduced to a few hectares; hence, the difficulty of the West in understanding Islamic governments. In India, the competition between warriors and priests had long since been resolved by each accepting that the other understood they had won. China presents an example of an entirely different situation: the priestly and warrior class was one leading to the ruler being the chief priest of the society. In such a

situation, secular and sacred cannot be meaningfully distinguished. Accordingly, from a comparative perspective, politics, along with sports, are the major religious rituals in modern "democracies". Voting, and all the activities that lead to it, are the means by which the individual participates in cyclic renewal rituals, particularly in the American, non-parliamentary model.

4. The separation of religion and culture

As the concept of separation of Church and state can be traced back to the Renaissance, so too can the assumed separation of religion and culture. Stimulated by Islamic alchemy, influenced by both Chinese alchemy and Hellenistic cosmology and metaphysics, as well as the interrelated Jewish Kabbalah, the rising interest in alchemy and Aristotle in western Europe was slowly transmuted into chemistry, physics and mechanistic cosmology, the roots of modern science.

Concurrently, the orientation towards the written Bible with both the Reformation and Counter-Reformation led to increasing fundamentalism. The Church divorced itself from intellectual culture as the universities removed themselves from Church control. By the late nineteenth century, popularized science began to replace theology as the ideological foundation of western European and American culture. The more the churches resisted changing ideology, the more religion was assumed to be incompatible with the new concept of "Truth." The strain, early exemplified in the Church forcing Galileo to recant, continued with the successful criminal prosecution in the twentieth-century American south of teaching Darwinian evolution. The current insistence by Christian Fundamentalists in Canada and the United States to include "creation science" in the supposed secular curriculum controlled by local and regional governments is but the latest indication of the continued religio-cultural struggle.

As religion was equated with institutions, the rise of educational and other related institutions separate from the churches led to a concept of nonreligious culture versus religion, i. e., science verses superstition. This conflict was assumed to be matter of fact by those in support of either set of institutions. Freedom of religion was increasingly interpreted as freedom from religion by many. But from Geertz's or any other cultural anthropological definition of religion, culture was not moving away from religion but towards transformed religious understandings.

In modern western cultures, for example, the cosmos is popularly understood from outdated scientific hypotheses reunderstood as dogma and known not from scientific experimentation but faith. Similarly, those sports significant to specific western cultures, especially when combined with modern communications technology, have become for large segments of the relevant populations the primary sources of potent rituals for communal bonding, ecstatic experience and symbolic understanding. Their locales have become the modern equivalent of the cathedral. In Toronto, for example, with a domed stadium next to what is claimed to be the tallest free-standing structure in the world, the combined edifice even resembles a traditional European cathedral, replete with gargoyles.

It is generally accepted that in the past sports, from the Hellenic Olympics to the Native American ball game, were powerful religious rituals. Regarding the latter, all known examples were major religious rituals. The now poorly understood pre-Columbian Mesoamerican ball game "field" was at the center of temple complexes or, as in Puerto Rico, seems to have been the only large religious structures. In northeastern North America, "lacrosse" was a major shamanic competition between rival, non-warring communities. In the North American plains, among the Lakota for example, a thrown ball was used in menarche rituals. Is it any wonder then that the largest contemporary congregational structures worldwide are stadiums? Can such a communal focus be understood other than as a religious modality?

Again from the comparative standpoint, does the shifting of entertainment from temple grounds to massive buildings no longer called temples change the actuality of the human response? When a composer, for example, Bruckner, creates a symphony in which he sees God, which because of the required size of the orchestra can only be played in a symphonic hall, can the enterprise be deemed nonreligious? Prior to television, when the movie theater became far more popular than the neighborhood or town church, was it not also a temple? And what of the ubiquitous television set, the center of family and individual attention and the provider of mild ecstasy (i. e., hypnotic trance) for many hours each day?

Similarly, the contemporary tendency to remove aesthetic pursuits from its normal religious context since the beginning of human culture at least thirty thousand years ago, has, in effect, deemed art irrelevant to most people. The public art museum, although in architecture often modeled on Greek and Roman temples, has become more mausoleum than temple. A reinterpretation of art as inherently religious, regardless of its content, as was understood in traditional China (Paper forthcoming), could have the opposite effect.

5. Conclusions

The assumed separation of religion and socio-political phenomena is a specific cultural concept difficult to apply outside of its culture of origin. One has only to think of the present conflicts throughout the world. Generally put in nationalistic terms, they are invariably both explicitly and implicitly religious, hence, cultural: Southeast Asia, North Ireland, Yugoslavia, India-Pakistan, Southwest Asia, Indonesia, various parts of Africa, etc.

To present one of many possible examples, one has only to consider a Native American culture located but a hundred kilometers from the

locale of this conference. Only with Christianization and Christian synthesis were the Canadian and United States governments able to shift Mohawk socio-political structures from a matrilineal and matrilocal society led by male religious leaders chosen by female elders to a patrilineal and patrilocal social order eventually led by elected assimilated, i. e., Christianized, males. After two decades of revitalization, the leadership imposed by the dominant cultures has seriously eroded, increasingly replaced by traditional modes not recognized or resisted by the dominating governments. As a result, armed conflicts have taken place both between these two factions of the split communities and with the governments in the two countries. Quite recently, the Quebec government has considered purchasing German heavy tanks for its police to crush the Mohawk religio-cultural revitalization, which the provincial government considers seditious. But a few weeks ago, the Canadian federal government again imposed an elected form of government of its own design to replace the revitalized gynecocratic/ traditional system supported by a majority of the community.

Modern culture is not *ipso facto* inimical to religion, which outside of Christianity is understood in respect to behavior rather than ideology. No country is more modern than contemporary Japan, yet in spite of the forced inclusion of western notions of religion in the country's constitution, the Emperor remains the chief priest of the culture, with a sacred charisma similar to that of the Roman Catholic Pope (not its God as the Americans misunderstood). The more Chinese cultures found in Taiwan and Singapore modernize, the more traditional religion flourishes.

As China discovered in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution, a revolution in part oriented against traditional religion which was coterminous with the state for at least the last four millennium, the destruction of the religious foundation of the socio-political order created an ideological vacuum that profoundly destabilized the social order. The understanding by some western scholars of religion that a phenomena they identified and labeled as Maoism had replaced traditional religion has proven to be both simplistic and incorrect. Perhaps

the reorientation of Chinese religion failed because it was proclaimed to be based on alien roots, Marxist-Leninism, rather that on its actual indigenous foundation.

Particularly with Marxism in these regards, confusion remains paramount. Frequently analyzed as a religious phenomena, avowed Marxists are often belligerently atheistic. But in many parts of Latin America, Roman Catholic priests and theologians are at the forefront of liberation movements, often nominally Marxist, against the wishes of the Vatican.

After three-quarters of a century of official atheism in the Soviet Union, the crumbling of Communist Party control has led to the resurgence of ethnic concerns with a concomitant religious revival. The changing of the name of Leningrad back to St. Petersburg is replete with manifold symbolic and, accordingly, religious significance. The situation perhaps is made more chaotic in that the nominal religious understandings have remained static for the last century, examples being the revitalization of Russian Orthodoxy with implicit late Czarist anti-semitism and the revival of fighting between Muslims and Armenian Christians.

In summary, religious transformation and socio-political change are one and the same. The duality of the concept arises from unique circumstances in the last several hundred years of western European culture, wherever found. Eastern Europe maintained concepts more typical of those to be found in the rest of the world, assuming the concept of religion is applicable outside of Christianity. For example, Russia under the Czars did not understand the government to be separate from the Church; hence, the enmity of the Marxist-Leninist government to the Orthodox Church. As Russia resurrects itself as a separate country, would we not expect a resurgence of the Church? This is a question best examined by specialists in eastern European church history.

Historians of religion can contribute to the understanding of socio-political transformations by explicitly studying these developments as religious phenomena. With regard to Latin America, for example, many questions related to religion and modern developments come to mind

for a comparative religionist: e.g., is there a relationship between liberation theology and Native American traditions, whether egalitarian as are most, or hierarchical with a communal economy as, for example, Incan religion and government? As Macumba (Candomblé) spreads among the urban middle classes in Brazil, what potential effects could this have on the socio-political order? I am certain scholars of religion more familiar with Latin America could ask better and more relevant questions.

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Eastern Europe

Leonid J. Smolyakov

The intelligentsia between secular and religious culture

The recent socio-political transformations in the former Soviet Union that have impressed political and ideological pluralism into the source of our being, have established the study of religion in my country as equal to that of the social sciences. In the past, the study of religion was limited to atheism, ideological godlessness. Now the study of the religious life of the country in general as well as of specific confessions is being carried out as we try to comprehend all aspects of the spiritual life of our society. As it turns out, our society is quite religious. But with the breaking of ideological chains (the process is far from being completed), many different interests and viewpoints are being expressed. Intense debates occur in the press, in literature, at scientific symposia, in lecture halls. Many are hurrying to stake out their viewpoints, to express themselves, since there are no longer restraints upon the expression of ideas. But the threat of sliding back into the "Dark Ages" remains constantly with our society.

It was only natural that religious figures and clergymen began to participate in the legislative and public life of the country, and that theologians and scholars in the field of religion became more and more active in the scientific sphere. But we also witness a reverse process. More and more secular figures and politicians became partners with and associates of the Church in resolving secular and religious issues. They started a dialogue, take part in discussions, and cooperate with professors in the field of religion. In other words, the study of spiritual life in my country is not limited only to religious life; its direct subject is the intelligentsia.

I'd like to specify the notion of intelligentsia in some detail. The intelligentsia are defined as a social layer of people connected with so-called "mental labor". In Soviet literature, its place has been clearly fixed; it was somewhere in the background of the Soviet social structure just behind workers and peasants. An image of intelligentsia was depicted on posters for all to see: a blond young man, physically weak – his build impressed no one – wearing spectacles on his nose. He appeared from behind (or was standing behind) two large broad-shouldered figures very well physically built – a man representing workers and a woman representing peasantry. Intelligent people were thus portrayed as lazy and dependent upon the working-people's family. This idea, promulgated by the official Soviet media, is quite ridiculous when we look at it from the perspective of the present moment. Some years ago I came up with my own concept of the intelligentsia. They belong to a socio-cultural community of people with developed intellectual and moral reflection which is the object of intellectual, spiritual production in any society. They do not deal with stereotyped forms of mental work but with creative intellectual work. Their life is full of sense; they doubt everything, including themselves, which is why the intelligentsia criticize everything, the state as well as the self.

I suggested above that the intelligentsia is the direct object of all forms of spiritual production, including the religious spirit. I believe that religiousness and religious consciousness are an inalienable part of our being and of the human spirit. This sphere is subconscious, mystical, and irrational, but at the same time, quite real, essential. It should be taken into account and considered.

As is well known, the history of the spiritual life of mankind organically includes the history of religious life. And when the Soviet social sciences artificially separated these two phenomena, we actually undermined by force the integrity of the historical spiritual process, cutting it off, and in this way limited our understanding in general.

I hope that we have overcome these misunderstandings. Russian culture has already met religious culture halfway. Strictly speaking, culture is not divided into types but is integral to the self-fulfillment

of human nature, to the essence of human creativity. It is important for me to draw to the attention of my present colleagues the ferment of culture as a catalyst of spiritual progress, and the intelligentsia as a socio-cultural community of people.

I would like to mention that the Institute I am privileged to head in Moscow is called the Institute for Socio-Cultural Integration. The secular and religious integration of human life is one of the major programs of the Institute, not only on the theoretical level but on the practical one also. Not long ago, the Institute became one of the founders of the Soviet National Association for the Study of Religion. One of its main goals is to bridge the gap of misunderstanding and alienation between the so-called secular and religious sciences.

Moreover, I'd like to underline the fact that we witness today tendencies towards the general development of spiritual life. Spiritual life is boiling up everywhere because of the intellectual creative process which is the core of this life. The struggle of ideas, the appearance of new ones and the death of old doctrines and concepts, and claims of absolute truth are typical of both secular and religious ideas.

Up to the period of developed capitalism, social thought had mostly a religious form and character. This can be explained by the predominance of theological ideas in feudal states that were expressed directly by the clergy — the only educated social class at the time. The Church gave a religious interpretation of the secular state structure based on feudal principles; Church dogma was the starting point and the basis of any thinking. Jurisprudence, natural science and philosophy developed in compliance with Church doctrine. In the feudal period, any public social or political movement had to assume a religious form. It is natural that priests, being the most important ideologists who appeared due to the feudal separation of intellectual and material labor, comprised the major part of intellectuals.

I can't agree with those Soviet scholars who believe that it's impossible to refer to educated representatives of the Church as intelligentsia. They assume that the intelligentsia as such appeared only after the separation of the Church and education, when the process of seculari-

zation began. This view represents an example of the one-sided approach to the intelligentsia. In this case, secular education is given paramount importance. Missing here is an assessment of the activities of intelligentsia who are connected with that history of intellectual production which appeared prior to the emergence of secular forms of education. The approach under criticism underestimates the real and essential role of the Church and of the clergy in education, in culture, in uniting people of the Middle Ages, and thus, it neglects their intellectual impact not only in that time, but for the future.

I don't think that it is appropriate to link the appearance of an intelligentsia directly with secular education since the essential thing here is not the educational background (secular or religious) but the role in creating and disseminating culture, knowledge and spiritual ideas. An individual may be well educated but not disseminate spiritual culture. The intellect may be self-contained. It can be compared with a self-sufficient intellectual economy. From a socio-philosophical perspective, it does not matter whether the intellectual development of society takes place in a historically predetermined religious form or in a secularized form. It is sufficient to recall that in a number of secular universities there were originally only theological faculties.

If we support the idea that the intelligentsia should achieve only a certain level of secular education, we shall be unable to apply this criterion to, for example, Martin Luther, a prominent figure of the Reformation. Despite his theological views and religious activities, his role was decisive because it reflected the essence of the activities of the intelligentsia. He worked for the liberation of the consciousness and will of hundreds of thousands of common people. He lifted them up to a new level, a level of self-consciousness that is characteristic of the intelligentsia.

It might seem to be paradoxical that it was a theologian who fought against the secular lords of Germany for the transfer of part of the secularized riches to public schools. He even threatened the grand dukes with the anger of God if they put obstacles in the way of

education. The leader of Protestant intellectuals was very much concerned about strengthening Protestant Church culture, and he also promoted the culture of common believers (laymen). His contribution to the development of new trends in literature, poetry, art, philosophy, the study of law was no less than that of the humanists who mindfully promoted the flourishing of science and culture. Isn't this the selfless devotion of a true intelligentsia? Much the same can be said about Philipp Melancthon, or about the leader of the Swiss Reformation, John Calvin, who gave a republican, democratic character to the Church, or about many other clergy and ecclesiastical scholars.

Although we cannot call all the clergy intellectuals, it is essential to remember the contribution of the clergy to the development of culture, education and self-consciousness in specific historical periods. However, it is important in each case, to recognize that there are also among the clergy a number of reactionary figures calling for blind faith, obedience and submissiveness to God and fate, implanting darkness and ignorance among believers and acting from mercenary motives. They have nothing to do with the intelligentsia.

Religious intellectuals differ from secular intellectuals by their attitude to such notions as "science" and "faith". Science is a self-developing system of knowledge which includes the activities of people as agents of knowledge, creators of knowledge. In comparison with the system of education which studies the existing facts, it produces new knowledge. In order to become a system of science, systems of knowledge should have their own theory, method, and laws of development. Systems of belief do not require this. Faith is opposed to science as it is lacking any knowledge. Faith has only hope. Scientific knowledge is not something to believe in but to be proved by practice. It is impossible, for instance, to say that I believe in the theory of relativity by Albert Einstein or I believe in Marxism-Leninism as the only possible theory of social development. Those intellectuals who turned Marxism into a symbol of faith actually betrayed their secular affiliation. It was not by chance that we were called priests of the Marxist parish since we defended not Christ but Marx as God.

In the history of knowledge we can't remember a single case when the scientific character of a theory was proved by placing it among the objects of faith. Faith always triumphed when the scientific character of the problem was called into question. Faith appears when human activities do not result in knowledge or when it is claimed that knowledge has an absolute character. Neither in the first case nor in the second is knowledge verified. There is no need in getting at the truth since faith assumes the form of the truth. I allow myself to paraphrase Tertullian's words: I believe in it because it is absurd, but I don't understand it, I don't know about it.

But the intelligentsia have a weak point — their attitude to death. Secular intellectuals suffer from it most of all. Their science proves to them that beyond death there will be nothing but weeds on their grave. And, of course, the intellectual does not like it. And there will be the same kind of weeds on the grave despite the difference in personal qualities the individual had when he was alive: he could be clever or dumb, greedy or generous. Nothing matters in the face of death and the intellectual does not like this idea which is why he uses the creative potential of his mind to search for immortality. The intellectual who believes in God is in a better situation. His faith in life after death provides him a religious respite. There are, in general, more mystics among the intelligentsia and even among scientists than in any other group.

Democratization and *glastnost* has shed some light on a number of tragic and dark pages of our national history and made us shudder more than once. The truth wears boots coated with iron — they trampled our illusions about the bright past and future of my country, brought about skepticism in the young people, undermined their confidence in ideology, the party, the authorities, in everything that used to exist and exists now. Strange as it might seem, some people see salvation in the past of my country. For example, the writer Yuri Bondarev believes that democratic and anarchic twaddle drains the souls of the Soviet youth and fills them with mistrust. The writer put forward the following thesis: one gram of faith is sometimes more

precious than the experience of a wise man when the opposition between faith and wisdom is evident. In such an antinomy, faith lacking in wisdom turns into the blind faith of religious belief.

Young people should not be nourished by grams of faith but by the whole truth, no matter how tough and horrible it might be. It is not a way to anarchism, but to the purification of consciousness and intellect from thoughtless faith in abstractions and phantoms with which the younger generation is already fed up. Truth of this kind does not do harm to such notions as Motherland, even as we begin to realize its tragic history full of sufferings; it becomes more dear to us than a sick child to his parents. The bitter truth about the Motherland causes in the young intellectuals one of the most patriotic and revolutionary feelings — the feeling of national shame. Shame is anger which is self-directed. The great Russian patriot, Pyotr Chaadayer, once wrote: I prefer to castigate my Motherland, distress it, or humiliate it rather than betray it. Rather than a tearful faith, we would better have a more critical mind.

It is very difficult to remain a true intellectual. It is a kind of social mission. Those who act freely and creatively display in this way their popular spirit and unselfish devotion to the social well-being. It becomes their intrinsic necessity to live with people and for the sake of people; this is the real meaning of the life of the intellectual. We should take into consideration the great ideological role of intellectuals who have the strong ability to influence people through their intellect. Ideologists can inspire progressive activities among the masses or push them to reactionary movements. Although a minority, they are capable of leading the masses of people. If a dozen intellectuals clearly realize the unconscious needs of thousands of people, they will be followed by the masses. But the question is where they will lead? The answer depends on the conscience of the leaders, the ideologists.

But conscience is a category very close to a religious one, the same regulator of the activities of people as their responsibility before the God. Here I see the point of intersection between the secular and the religious intellectual life.

Vladimir Zotz

Personal spiritual orientations and religiousness in (former) Soviet society

Humanity is too heterogeneous to press a single pattern upon its development. Speaking figuratively, the historical river of human communities divided, so to say, in separate streams, each choosing its own way at a certain stage. But the time comes when they flow together again in a single stream, though each constituent current retains its individual characteristics for a long time, even in the common river bed.

Our country is no exception. Both the population and spiritual potential of the Soviet peoples are as heterogeneous as those throughout the world. But there are, no doubt, some specific features here connected with its special way of development, that is, an individual stream which is flowing today again into the common bed of human civilization. And it wouldn't be difficult to see from the outside the specific features of this new stream and what has colored it in a strange shade that differs from the normal and traditional historic river. You can also see that the reunification of civilizations is taking place on the wave of the consciousness revolution brought about by the processes of *perestroika* in the USSR.

We are beginning to deal with a new phenomenon of public and political life — the liberation of the *consciousness of the Soviet people*. This is a complex, multidimensional phenomenon, characterized by a resolute liberation from the official standard that attempts to strangle all individuality and nonconformity.

The model of spiritual and ideological process in the country seems to be absolutely renewed today under conditions of democracy, plurality

of opinions, refusal to recognize the truth monopoly of a single party, and recognition of the dialectic wholeness of the world. Public opinion is constantly influenced by the great variety of political forces which compete with each other and with ideological subjects. The socialist ideal which was often treated as sheer anticapitalism is now being reconsidered. Any stance which is not in conflict with law has the right to ideological and moral argumentation.

No doubt this is a positive development from the point of view of the democratization of society. But one should not disregard the fact that the freedom granted by new political thinking is not always used for good purposes. Let's take religious freedom for example. It would be appropriate here to recall questions addressed by the American philosopher Paul Kurtz to Soviet sociologists: Has religiousness been reduced in Marxist countries after so many years of antireligious propaganda? Is it going to rise again now that the pressure on it has been eased? You may judge yourselves: the religious factor in social and political life and in interethnic relations has recently been gaining in importance and vigor. An enhanced influence of churches on social and cultural processes has become evident, clerical tendencies are now visible, especially in relation to school, science, and culture, in the convergence of national and religious extremism, and in interethnic and interconfessional conflicts. The "Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations" in the USSR and the "Law of the Russian Federation on Freedom of Religious Beliefs" have created favorable conditions that meet the religious demands of believers. Many new religious periodicals have appeared in the USSR, such as *Tserkovnyi Vestnik* ('*Church Herald*') and *Protestant*, a number of international religious and educational organizations are working actively, and new theological educational institutions have been opened.

The years of *perestroika* beginning in 1986 have seen the formation and registration of about 8,000 new religious associations of different confessions and denominations, that is, one third of all associations now existing. The registration of religious associations is invariably accompanied by the restoration of temples, churches, synagogues,

mosques, and other houses of prayer, as well as items of worship having historical value. Additionally, thirty-three monasteries have been opened during the last five years with large architectural complexes given over to them.

A course has been taken in the country to eliminate prejudices, obsolete stereotypes, and odious thinking. We have moved from total atheism to plurality in this area.

The enforcement of the "Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations" has affirmed the irreversible nature of these changes and is an instrument for the further improvement of church-state relations. The Law was worked out on a broad democratic basis. Leading Soviet lawyers, legal experts and religious scholars, specialists from various ministries and departments, and representatives of all confessions, denominations, and religious groups participated in this work. International practice was also taken into consideration. After the Bill was approved by the USSR Supreme Soviet in the first reading, it was published in the mass media for open discussion.

Both legislators and the overwhelming majority of Soviet citizens approved the designation, basic provisions, and intention of the "Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations". The Law covers the entire territory of the country and "guarantees the citizens' rights to define and express their attitude towards religion, to follow their respective convictions, to confess their religion and observe religious rites without obstacles, and to enjoy social justice and equality, the protection of the citizens' rights and interests regardless of their stance towards religion, and to regulate relations connected with activities of religious associations."

The Law confirms the constitutional provision that "in accordance with the right to freedom of conscience each citizen determines his/her own attitude towards religion, enjoys the right to confess any or no religion personally or corporately, expresses and propagates convictions concerning his/her attitude towards religion." This basic understanding of the right to the freedom of conscience is in accord with Article 18 of the Universal Human Rights Declaration (1948) and with appropriate

provisions of other acts of international law which are signed by, among others, the Soviet Union.

But here the "pendulum effect" has also occurred. For the past two or three years, a noted politicization of religion has become evident in our country, an involvement of some religious leaders in politically-minded public movements, including popular fronts, and in newly formed parties. A number of political parties have sprung up on a confessional basis, such as the Christian Democratic or Muslim parties. Clericalization of political programs in the sphere of spiritual and cultural life, and vigorous activities among young people are aimed at the creation of a mass social basis for the above mentioned parties. Believers are now addressed by candidates for people's deputies, many of whom are cult ministers.

Religions are not being involved in political struggle casually, therefore, and this involvement inevitably leads to interconfessional confrontation. This is especially true of the Ukraine. In the situation of social tension, Greek Catholic, Orthodox and inter-Orthodox conflicts may trigger an even more large-scale social explosion which has already acquired an anti-Soviet and anticommunist coloration.

RUKh, the Democratic Bloc, the People's Rada, and a significant part of the Ukrainian intelligentsia are oriented toward the Uniate and Autocephalic Churches. All mass cultural events and public and political actions are conducted under the auspices of these churches.

Interchurch relations in the Ukraine, which have yielded a number of socially dangerous explosions during the last two years, have both stirred the masses of believers in the republic and caused loud resonance throughout the whole country, in church and political circles abroad, and among the Ukrainian diaspora. The main line of tension in these religious conflicts is drawn along the "triangle" consisting of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, the Ukrainian Autocephalic Orthodox Church, and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Each of these three churches confronts the other two. The conflicts have involved the Vatican siding with the Greek Catholic Church, and the Moscow Patriarchate supporting the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

On the surface of the conflict one can see the struggle of Greek Catholics and Autocephalists to revive their churches while the Ukrainian Orthodox Church is fighting to safeguard its position. Hence, the struggle is for spheres of influence, for leadership in the national revival, and, more prosaically but very pointedly, for the redistribution of premises of worship. All this is undergirded by the social and political stratification of Ukrainian society, the differentiation and polarization of political forces, the power struggle and search for mass support by new political movements. And the religious community has a real mass basis indeed. About 15—20 million people in the Ukraine are under the influence of religion while active adult believers number about 810 million persons.

But no massive growth in religious convictions has been detected by sociologists. Correspondingly, no mass conversion of unbelievers to the church has taken place if we look at religion in real terms and not mistake it for an outbreak of interest in religion as an untouched area of culture and folk traditions which were intertwined with the religious traditions in the past. All this should be taken into account in order to assess the real religious, political, and spiritual situation in an unbiased way.

Interconfessional and interchurch conflicts have both present-day causes and historical roots. Generally speaking, religious crises and accompanying interconfessional conflicts are not new in the history of the Ukraine. The first was caused by the introduction of Christianity in Russia in 988 A.D., the second was the result of the Brest Union in 1596, the third was connected with the Old Believers' schism in 1666—1667, though the Ukraine was not greatly affected by it. The fourth crisis was brought about by autocephaly and renewal in postrevolutionary years, and the fifth one resulted from the Lvov Council in 1946. Now we have a sixth crisis.

It is typical of these crises that none of them were caused by religious reasons as such. Rather, the crises were brought about by political circumstances. Dominant circles in different periods made certain reorientations in their policy (regardless of whether they were justified

or unjustified) and attempted to have the church adjust to them. Existing church structures were broken, different groups of believers or confessions confronted each other, and nonconformists were subjected to severe repressions.

Thus, the church had to suffer harassment and persecutions not only in the years of the Stalinist totalitarian regime. Such things happened in its history more than once under the power of both princes and czars. The fact is that Christianity came to Russia with the established tradition of the church's subordination to secular authorities and its inclusion into government structures. This situation was consolidated in Russia and became its tradition as well. On the one hand, it has organically intertwined church history with the general one, but, on the other hand, it made the church an instrument of dominating force, though the clergy did not always favor it.

As far as the Soviet period is concerned, the separation of church and state did not mean its separation from society and politics. It is virtually impossible to separate religion from society and politics. As citizens, believers have always been organically involved in social processes and felt their influence regardless of whether they were favorable or unfavorable for the activities of religious associations. Everything that took place in society was reflected to a certain extent in the religious milieu. This organic relationship has been unequivocally clear during the years of *perestroika*. Public activities, democratization, and politicization have seized believers as well. It is natural that religious organizations have affirmed their political involvement. Besides, the imperfect character of church-state relations in the period preceding *perestroika*, the obsolescence of religious legislation, the unstable legal positions of some confessions sharpened the political nature of the religious factor. That's why the religious factor takes third place among the causes of tension in our society after economic and political factors, or has become intertwined with political and interethnic factors.

Similar process can be seen now in the Baltic Republics, Middle Asia, Georgia, Armenia, etc. The level of religious rites has grown two- or threefold. The share of young people, particularly young men,

has significantly grown in urban religious communities, especially in Orthodox parishes. Clergy of all confessions have developed religious, educational, and missionary work in a broad front using for this purpose both charity actions and Sunday Schools for children and adults. Thus, one can see the intention of reactionary forces spiritually to reorient the personality from humanistic values to the world of illusory transcendental bliss.

And now the clergy has become a permanent guest at state television and radio broadcasting stations. They participate in the dedication of schools, shops, and hospitals, and attend many secular meetings, read lectures and participate in debates at various public meetings. They are involved in business activities, establish co-ops, joint ventures, charity parties, and spiritual concerts that include the propaganda of religious literature. The church is purposefully trying to infiltrate the everyday life of workers. The religious education of children is arbitrarily introduced in general schools.

A position independent of political groupings, social forces, and national features is occupied by Protestant churches, such as the Baptists, Seventh Day Adventists, or Jehovah's Witnesses, which have become very active in recent years, have a large influx of new members, expanded public missionary and recruiting activities, and strengthened contacts with their foreign religious centers. Under conditions of the multiparty system, Protestant congregations and communities shape political aims in election campaigns and form the range of political thinking of their adherents in ways that reflect their specific stance.

Society has become literally flooded with mystics in the recent period. Astrologers, palmists, sorcerers, enchanters, fortune tellers, various mystics, UFO fans, and people endowed with extrasensory gifts are now in the foreground. They establish their republican organizations, seek to influence the political sympathies of broad populations and incite people with their predictions. They are popularized by the mass media. Mysticism has become a unique fashion of nonconformist thought.

The growth of religious influence and the revival of religious propaganda are not just the result of the democratization of public life and the return to normality of church-state relations, but also are one of the symptoms of a deep political and spiritual crisis in society. A certain part of society, especially the intelligentsia, believes that the way out of this crisis is connected with religion which is considered by them to be an instrument of spiritual and national revival, a humanistic element of cultural heritage, and the only carrier of human values. Simultaneously, atheism is represented as the main reason for spiritual decline, the propagation of alcoholism, and crime. One can hear calls to "openly proclaim the vicious nature of the theory and practice of atheism", and to "publicly proclaim the church anathema upon false teachers with their materialistic dogma" (*Literaturnaya Gazeta* 51, December 19, 1990).

Opposition to scientific knowledge about religion is more and more evident, and this knowledge has recently been drastically curtailed. The concepts of "atheism", "materialism", and "freedom of thought" are disappearing from secondary and higher education, publishing, and oral propaganda. Interest in the history and theory of religion is, in most cases, dominated by the clergy.

The religious situation, intertwined with the general social, political, and national situation, is becoming increasingly complicated. As far back as the 1970's, theoreticians of atheism gave up militant antireligious propaganda and chose a course aimed at tolerance and dialogue with believers. Their cultural and educational activities which form a scientifically sound and realistic understanding of both religion and atheism has not been adequately appreciated, though these efforts have paved the way to contemporary changes in church-state relations and in the attitude towards religion. Now atheism and religion have changed places. All negative characteristics of religion are now mechanically applied to atheism which has become a kind of scapegoat for all deformations in our society. While earlier the arrow of the spiritual barometer greatly deviated from common sense in the attitude towards religion, now the same phenomena are evident with respect to atheism. At that time the spring was pressed on the side of believers which

resulted in reverse effects, but now it is pressed on the side of atheists resulting in similar problems. The prospect of confrontation between believers and unbelievers is real now and should be prevented. Mutual understanding and cooperation between believers and unbelievers is a great political problem since we are talking after all about the stability of a society we are striving so dearly to achieve.

It goes without saying that scientific atheism, which offers ideals and values different from religion, has its own techniques based on the implementation of Marxist humanistic ideals. However, this factor cannot be a basis or an excuse for division among people adhering to different outlooks or for building up barriers among them. On the contrary, it shows that atheism is aimed at uniting, integrating, and organizing people, thus consolidating their joint activities in ways that result in further cultural development.

The question is: how can we isolate and define this common and integrating basis? How can we direct it to the road of consensus, the path of constructive actions? Or, in simpler terms, how can we prevent and eliminate a confrontation of outlooks? How can we direct differences in outlooks to the conjunction of the unique and common, to the harmony of the personal and social, in order that the priority of the latter over the former may triumph, and relations among peoples may really have a humane, humanistic, and cultural basis?

A prerequisite for finding a way out of the crisis is a strengthening of the humanistic potential of *perestroika*, bringing to life the vigorous forces of socialism, and a significant modification of our way of life. Generally speaking, everything here is connected with and depends on cultural problems, problems of tolerance, a humanism in social relations where both atheism and religion can and do assert their existence.

The excommunication of atheism and atheists from humanism, accusations of atheism as the basis for all possible human sorrows, including the lack of spirituality, has a long-standing history. Its roots can be found in the Bible and in works by the early Church Fathers. Nevertheless, atheism, regretfully, does not have sufficiently convincing arguments about the inconsistency of these accusations, especially those

which concern the allegedly destructive effect on ethics, culture, and the personal spiritual world.

Religion, which is known to enhance its role in times of social crises, has always been designated by theologians as a science burdened with care for man, with the spiritual health of the people, and with healing the souls of lost sinners. If we correlate these assertions with real life, they are far from being perfect. How can one call religion a science if it rejects all doubts, all alternatives, if it, in other words, contradicts science in understanding the essence of truth which is the most important point for science. To be a science, it must search for, substantiate, and defend the truth. Truth for science is the consistency and adequacy of something which really exists, which is manifested and elucidated in some properties, which is identified by experiments rather than indoctrination and thoughtless obedience to commands. To make a long story short, the truth is determined on a practical basis rather than through speculation only. Therefore, scientific truth is always connected with the freedom of the human critical spirit. Religion, particularly Christianity, proclaims: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (John 14: 6). In this case believers have only one way open to them, i. e., to observe the words of God according to the Bible (Ps. 117: 57), to understand and conceive them as "a commandment of God" (Isa. 55: 3), as "the perfect truth" (Ps. 117: 113).

As to theological assertions on the exalted role of man in religion, one cannot reject or question their validity. Indeed the dominating dogma of Christianity, i. e., the redeeming death of God's only Begotten Son, is projected with all its meaning onto the vision that people who have believed in the wisdom and justice of God "may have life, and may have it abundantly" (John 10: 10). For this reason belief is, for the adherents of Christianity, the determining law of spirituality, the law which allegedly gives its followers moral life and hope for one's well-being.

What can atheism counterpose, if anything, to assertions of this kind? In other words, can assertions of spirituality cover atheism as well? Or might atheists be "a tool for training theological thought and

substantiating the significance of religion"? These questions somehow convey the uniqueness of the time that our society is going through. Not so long ago, they could not be considered since they would have been regarded as preposterous, reactionary, and subversive of the basic principles of the official ideology. Today, they are in the center of public interest. For there are many people who believe that it is only religion that can contain and save man from moral decay rather than knowledge of the world and moral self-conscience.

Glastnost has, in fact, exposed many negative facts which testify that atheism has nothing to do with spirituality. It seems, at first glance, that these facts denigrate atheism and abolish the question of its spirituality. Was not atheism involved, for instance, in revolutionary methods for the destruction of old social relations? Were not those in power using atheism in our country for many years as an instrument of the affirmation, or, rather, the mechanical imposition of single-mindedness? And was not it in the name of atheistic considerations, as many authors have expressed in numerous publications, that soon after 1917 the church was blocked by various administrative and legal obstacles so that it was unable anywhere to heal the "souls of lost sinners"? And what is the result? Is it not social hypocrisy, moral deceit, tragic discrepancy between what we practice and what we preach?

As is known, atheism has resulted in all the above factors. But it would be absolutely wrong to regard atheism as a form of adventurism in sociology. It would also be wrong seriously to consider the affirmations of certain persons who try to profit from the situation, that atheism is not a science since it rejects religion and fails to recognize its involvement with the foundations of morality and its ability to transform the world in a humane way.

Intolerance to atheism on the part of its present adversaries should be studied separately. One should note, however, that humanism — which is much closer to atheism than some may think — is a philosophy of human priorities. It affirms the equality of human beings before the law and defends the right of each individual to an honor and dignity

that has been proclaimed by religion to be a testimony to "the rebellion against God".

The historical reasons for the development of atheism, its direct involvement in culture and its buildup of humanistic potential may not cause any doubts among realistic scholars. It is true that atheism in our country was used for purposes of class distinction and class interests which had a very negative effect on scholarly objectivity concerning atheism and resulted in a wholesale rejection of religion as a carrier of spiritual values. There are, however, actually no higher and lower cultures, progressive and regressive ones; there exist different cultures only. Their difference is not in "whats" but in "hows", in what way and in what forms. If this is true, then the struggle between atheism and religion is that of different outlooks and of their priorities rather than group prejudices.

In simpler terms, if the concept of "being" and "man-society" relations is the organizational foundation for atheism, the concept of "the supernatural" and "God-man" relations are basic for religion. For this reason, the content of culture that is defended and affirmed by atheism is based on the priority given to sovereign being, to man himself, to man's labor and to the human spirit, while in religion it is given to the supernatural and human dissatisfaction.

The acceptance by atheism of different cultures rather than a view of cultures as progressive or reactionary implies an acceptance of the value of the self-sufficient significance of any culture. If we take Christianity, for instance, it is directly connected with the development of ethics. For example, the Christian doctrine of virtues attracts attention to the emotional aspect of morality and the role played in it by passions, faith, and love. Christianity introduces the fundamental moral idea of a fraternal unity as a basis for the development of the human spirit. It is worth noting that Christianity has broadened the range of understanding of human moral qualities and laid the foundation for an active analysis of many of them.

In other words, emphasizing the existence of different cultures with a certain degree of humanism inherent to them all, excludes *per se* the

sheer rejection of religion, which, according to F. Engels, is inadmissible and harmful ("Anti-Düring"). And each time, atheism has the opportunity to determine the value and meaning of human existence, and this determination is not in general terms or through a prism of an abstract idea but with consideration of the existence of a particular human being, a particular society, and the historical uniqueness of its development. This means that atheism poses higher requirements to scholarly interpretations of past and present realities, both personal and religious. This makes it possible to exclude "cavalry raids" on atheism which disorient people and instigate unwarranted emotions.

Rather, the nature of changes in the public conscience, including the religious one, can be understood only in the context of historical perspective rather than in terms of an immediate spiritual crisis. Only a historical approach enables us to have insight into the deep meaning of the unsolved problems of existence, to understand causes for today's moral crisis. This confusion of *Weltanschauung* has affected even those who declared themselves to be militant atheists not long ago, and thus identifies the reasons for a deficit of spirituality and moral decline in modern society.

In the Soviet society, we preferably pay attention to political and economical problems. However, in spite of their importance, keenness and scale, it's necessary to realize that both economic and political institutions will not function successfully in immoral space.

The destruction of the Communist ideology is felt by a large strata of Soviet society as a spiritual crisis. From the perspective of the old ideals and values, a moral nihilism and cynicism that is especially harmful for the younger generation is confirmed. The result of these processes is the destruction of personality and social apathy. The ground is created for aggressiveness and animosity. The vacuum which appeared in place of Communist morality is filled with religious searchings and nationalistic ideas.

Such a state of society's moral health is aggravated by the level of the national mentality. Public conscience is strongly challenged by scholastics. A dogmatic way of thinking prevails. Conformist tendencies

are deeply rooted. There is direct evidence of a hostile attitude to the priority of personal values. Such a state is not only the result of the last seventy years, but is the result of a century-old development, when there was "WOE from WIT", and educated people were considered "intelligent uselessness".

In such a case there is a competition between a Communist ideology and a church with its eternal problem of "goodness and evil". To do justice to religion as the source of national-cultural traditions, as a spiritual support integral to a nation's power, one mustn't labor under a delusion about its potential to confirm "goodness". In no country of the world has a strengthening of the nation's health been promoted only through spreading religion. Nowhere in the world has the church been the unique force in resisting "evil".

Dalibor Papoušek

John Paul II and Mikhail Gorbachev: The process of globalization in multidimensional comparison

The revolutionary events that have taken place during the last months of 1989 have changed, as if in a moment, the political map of Middle and South-Eastern Europe. These changes include at least two layers of problems.

The layer which is nearer to the surface has to do with the sudden breakdown of totalitarian regimes. On the one hand, these breakdowns seem to be the results of increasing resistance among inhabitants of those countries who long for freedom and democracy; on the other hand, the results of the increasing helplessness of totalitarian power now deprived of direct Soviet control. The Christian Churches have played, without any doubt, an important role in the widening of this political horizon. Their participation implies, among other things, the problem of the internal transformations of religion that appeared with the involvement of religiously oriented people (*Chancen von Religiosität* 1991; Grabner, *et al.* 1990).

A second layer, or, as the case may be, the substrata of the above-mentioned processes, has to do with the global context in which recent events were situated and which enables us to follow the changes suggested in more dimensions. The comparison between the globalizing reflections of Catholicism and "reformed" Marxism, i. e., between factors that, in their official "hierarchically authorized" form, had an essential part in the preparation of political changes, can be presented as a practical illustration of this view.

Contemporary Marxist and Catholic interpretations of society have their origins in the second half of the nineteenth century. During that time, modern capitalist societies were fully constituted in Western Europe and North America. The first official manifestations of the social doctrines of both Marxism and Catholicism arose from the same time period in which the conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat ('the employers and the workers') was most pointed. This conflict led to a general identification of the "Social Question" with the "Question of Workers."

The Marxist conception of the social world is stated, in a popularized way, in the "Manifesto of the Communist Party" (1848). The founders of "scientific socialism", Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, formulated, in that policy statement, their thesis concerning class struggle. They related it to the whole of the history and from it, they derived the doctrine of the historical mission of the working class: mankind is liberated by means of revolution.

The Catholic Church officially answered the increasing relevance of the "Question of Workers" only at the end of the nineteenth century with the attempts by Pope Leo XIII to adapt the rigid structures of the Church to liberal capitalism. In the encyclical *Rerum novarum* (1891), he adopted a position strongly opposed to the "doctrine of the socialists", especially its tendency to require the liquidation of private property and its revolutionary overthrow of the government. In relation to the "Social Question", the Pope postulated that the Church was the only intermediary of conciliation between the bourgeoisie and proletariat since it was, in its substance, above history. However, by defending private ownership and the liberal state, he identified the Church, more or less, with capitalism. He limited, thereby, the frame within which the social doctrine of the Church operated during the first half of the twentieth century.

In the Church's conception, a polarity between "liberalism and communism", grew following the Russian revolution in 1917 that linked Marxist ideology with state power. Being afraid of the "atheistic communism" that threatened the very foundation of the Church, Pope Pius

XI even proposed, at the culmination of economic crisis (1931), a specific reform of capitalism which aimed at the suppression of social tension, thus playing into the hands of socialism (*Quadragesimo anno*). Pius XII, administering the Church under conditions of Europe's step-by-step separation into two power blocs, also took an analogous, one-track, antisocialist position. Only at the end of his pontificate, in consideration of the growing conflict between a capitalist West and a socialist East, did significant corrections begin to be asserted in the Catholic interpretation of the "Social Question."

Although the discrepancies of power that resulted in two World Wars were globalized in the first half of the twentieth century, it was only the nuclear explosion over Hiroshima that posed the possibility of self-annihilation as a qualitatively new factor of history. Despite this universal threat, the Great Powers representing the world-wide discrepancy between capitalism and socialism stood face-to-face at the beginning of the sixties, during the Caribbean crisis. Due to the threat of war, the representatives of the Great Powers, J. F. Kennedy and N. S. Khrushchev, had to face a global responsibility that went beyond the self-interest of the two blocs.

Parallel with that experience which, in its consequence, signified a transformation in the political existence of both protagonists, a deep transformation took place within the Catholic Church; it was provoked by the reform tendencies of progressives among high-ranking clergy, including the newly elected Pope John XXIII. Their endeavor to "open the Church to the world" (*aggiornamento*) followed, in particular, a break in the isolation of Catholicism from the modern world which weakened, to a certain extent, its traditional Eurocentrism. This progressive reform led to an enrichment of the fundamental sources of Catholic social doctrine.

In the encyclical *Mater et Magistra* (1961), John XXIII concluded that the extent of mutual dependence made individual nations face the necessity of reaching "agreement and co-operation" (1961: 448–449). A previous aspect of that tendency was the recognition of a planet threatened by possible war between capitalism and socialism which led

to full support of the endeavor to reach peace and disarmament (*Mater et Magistra* 1961: 449). Another destabilizing factor necessitating world-wide co-operation was represented, according to the conception of John XXIII, by the discrepancy between countries "more progressive from the economic point of view and those less developed" (*Mater et Magistra* 1961: 440—443). With this thematization, Catholic doctrine met the cultural dimension for the first time.

It was only Paul VI who explicitly globalized the social doctrine of the Church. Under his pontificate, the globalizing stimuli of John XXIII were systematized in the conception of a "general development of human being and solidary development of mankind." In the encyclical *Populorum progressio* (1967), Paul VI formulated, for the first time, quite clearly the thesis that "the 'Social Question' had reached world-wide dimensions" (1967: 258, 261). At the same time, he specified the problem of the "development of nations" as the most oppressive aspect of globalization, opening the dimension of intercultural relations between the North and the South to its full extent.

With the initiative of Paul VI, the Catholic development project was supposed to be coordinated with those programs concentrated, at that time, under the United Nations. These optimistic projects of development, however, supported by the "joyous hope" of the post-council documents, began breaking down unexpectedly in the course of the seventies. Their failure consisted in the underestimation of the extent of the discrepancies between advanced and developing countries, and in an extrapolation of an europeizing plan of development. The danger of planetary breakdown in this approach, formulated especially by the first Reports of the Club of Rome (Meadows 1972; Masarović—Pestel 1974), finally led thinking about globalization on the European model to recognize a necessity for deeper self-reflection.

For the Church, this process of rethinking social doctrine coincided, in principle, with the pontificate of John Paul II, which was, at the beginning, markedly modified by the rise of Western neo-conservatism and by the intensifying political and economic crisis within the East Bloc. The newly elected Pope responded to these changes by a step-

by-step revival of nationalistic traditionalism. Although this cooled down the international atmosphere it caused, in effect, a stagnation of Catholic globalization.

In the encyclical *Laborem exercens* (1981), John Paul II accentuated the ethical dimension of the "political economy" which, within the context of relations between the North and the South, enabled him to bring together capitalism and socialism and to find a common basis for one culture (*civilizatio*) which he characterized as materialism (1981: 593; cf. *Redemptor hominis* 1979: 267). When analyzing the category of work, considered to be the "key to the 'Social Question'", he identified the "purely materialistic" foundation of both capitalism and socialism with the "economism" characteristic of both Marxist collectivism and capitalist liberalism (*Laborem exercens* 1981: 592–594). In spite of that important clarification of the vague formulations of his predecessors, he did not substantially affect the dichotomy in the Church's conception of socialism and capitalism. Similar to John XXIII, and especially to Paul VI, he defended the reformability of "hard" capitalism, limiting his argument to the intracultural dimension of the conflict between the West and the East.

An unexpected revival of globalizing reflections appeared with the far-reaching changes in the very center of the East Bloc. The line of restructuring (*perestroika*) and of the new thinking (*novoye myshleniye*), proclaimed in the Soviet Union with the coming of Mikhail Gorbachev (1985), established not only the prerequisites for an internal economic reform and general democratization of life but also for a change in the external political relations of the Soviet State. The same awareness of global responsibility which, twenty years earlier had marked the encyclicals of John XXIII, led the Soviet representatives to carry out substantial changes in the new redaction of the "Program of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union" authorized by its XXVIIth Congress (1986). In this program, the proposition concerning the peaceful coexistence of states having different social systems, understood as the "specific form of class struggle," was canceled. In this proposition, the possibility of a Third World War had been theoretically admitted. A formulation

was substituted in which it "is considered to be inadmissible to transfer ideological discrepancies between two systems into these relations" (*Programma Kummunisticheskoi partii* 1986: 27). With this change, the principle of class struggle was eliminated from international relations, and the basis for new political negotiations established.

In 1987, Mikhail Gorbachev published his book *Perestroika and new thinking*. In it, he characterized his conception of internal changes to take place in the Soviet Union in the context of global transformations. As a matter of fact, he retained the one-dimensional paradigm of the class principle which, under the conditions of the nuclear epoch, came into severe conflict with common human interests (Gorbachev 1988: 130–136). However, he implanted into the general dialectics of "class and common human principles" the dimension of culture; it found its expression, in particular, in his concept of the "common European home."

Gorbachev's plan of a Europe "from the Atlantic to the Urals" is based on the idea of a certain wholeness to European civilization growing from common cultural roots. He views Christianity, on the one hand, and the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and great philosophical and social doctrines of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, on the other, as the fundamental components of a common European cultural heritage. By the composition of that specification, Gorbachev tends to leave Christianity aside, more or less, in favor of the values of Modernity – a picture of Europe potentially integrated from both economic and political points of view which enables a further increase of the "material civilization" (Gorbachev 1988: 177, 183). He considers the role of Europe to be, in this sense, unique and irreplaceable, and able, thereby, of making "an even bigger contribution to the progress of the rest of the world" (Gorbachev 1988: 194).

A gradual assertion of the Europe-wide process is necessary, according to Gorbachev, because the pressure of global problems, in spite of their universal importance, intersect with each other in Europe. In their intracultural dimension, Gorbachev warned against an accumulation of nuclear and conventional weapons that jeopardize the whole

of the continent, regardless of the distribution of power. He also pointed out the common interest in solving the intercultural discrepancy between the North and the South that has become a problem substantially more severe than the problems connected with relations between the West and the East. He mentioned, as well, the relation between culture and nature, drawing attention to the general danger of ecological crisis following from European industrialization (Gorbachev 1988: 181—182).

Gorbachev's approach bears resemblance to the structure of the encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis* by John Paul II, dated from the same year. However, although both authors, in principle, think in comparable dimensions, their global evaluations of European culture are different;[1] in a certain sense, they are even opposite.

In the encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, the Pope returned again to theoretical conclusions concerning the common cultural basis of capitalism and socialism that were not made use of in the earlier encyclical *Laborem exercens*. Under pressure of increasing problems in the developing countries, he kept aloof of both social systems, capitalism and socialism, referring to the moral inability of either to ensure the real development of human beings. Both include, "in their own way, the tendency to imperialism...or to various forms of neocolonialism",[2] which, according to John Paul II, casts doubt on their qualification to assume a "leading role among nations" (*Sollicitudo rei socialis* 1988: 540—541). As far as relations with the West were concerned, Catholic social doctrine, by that conclusion, implied a possible "moral" reform of capitalism. This conclusion put capitalism, by implication, on an equal footing with socialism. Any polarity in understanding the two social systems of the North was thereby definitively retracted.

John Paul II's ethicizing criticism of the consumer materialism of both social systems was concentrated, in the *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, on developing a comparison concerning the ethical correlation between "to be" (*esse*) and "to have" (*possidere*). The theological sense of that abbreviation, which is still included in official documents by Paul VI (*Allocutio 7 Ianuarii 1965* 1965: 232; cf. *Gaudium et spes* 1966: 1053), was consequently projected by the present Pope into the intercultural dis-

crepancy between the North and the South. He states explicitly: "There are a few who possess much but they are not able to 'be' because of the cult of 'having' which reverses the hierarchy of values; and there are many who have little or nothing, and who cannot, due to the penury of elementary goods, bring their fundamental human mission to life."[3]

John XXIII regarded the reason for the undesirable confusion of values to be the consequence of overemphasizing scientific-technical progress, and the gradual de-Christianization of Europe that followed (*Mater et Magistra* 1961: 449—450; 152—153). Paul VI had directed attention to the dangerous ambiguity of progress (*Populorum progressio* 1967: 266—267; cf. *Octogesima adveniens*, 1971: 429—450). However, it was only John Paul II who strictly separated the concept "progress" from that of "development" and categorically rejected as one-sided the concept "progress", which "originated from philosophical considerations of the Enlightenment" (*Sollicitudo rei socialis* 1988: 574—575).

The covert neo-conservative attempt to re-Christianize Europe, corresponds here, in a specific way, with the post-Modern revision of the Enlightenment and Modernity. After a decade marked by traditionalism, official Catholicism returned, by this single encyclical, to the *aggiornamento*. However, it was not the *aggiornamento* of the sixties which the modern world of the industrialized North regarded with "joyous hope", but the *aggiornamento* by means of which the Church looks for a new relation to the developing world of the South because that is where the majority of Catholics are now to be found.

The criticism of modern European civilization presented by John Paul II in the *Sollicitudo rei socialis* can seem to be too one-sided and general. However, the encyclical reaches its full objective only in the context of those papal documents that present a contrary view, that are oriented, more or less, to the intracultural level. The epistles concentrated on the Christian co-patrons of Europe, Cyrillus and Methodius, whose heritage represent, for the Pope, the intracultural link between the West and the East (*Egregiae virtutis* 1981; *Slavorum apostoli* 1985; *Euntes in mundum* 1988).

Mikhail Gorbachev represents, above all, the secular values of Modernity as constitutive for the whole of Europe; John Paul II, on the contrary, considers Christianity as the determinative factor of European integration. However, the competitive conceptions of the "European home" and the "Christian Europe" can hardly redivide the European continent, although there remain certain obstacles represented by Church triumphalism,[4] or by state-atheistic relapses. Their mutual complementarity is witnessed by those events from the end of 1989 which, in their genesis, were fostered by both these sources.

John Paul II and Mikhail Gorbachev above all, thematize the mutual penetration of intracultural and intercultural dimensions in European culture, i. e., the process in which socio-political changes are transformed into socio-cultural ones. In the context of intercultural communication, the integration of Europe exemplifies the changing cultural paradigm. Thus, John Paul II and Mikhail Gorbachev got "together" in the shadow of traditional European cultural hegemony of which both Modernity and Christianity were bearers.

In the years which have passed since these two seemingly disparate personalities met in a unique "literary" way, the topics of their globalizing reflections have been dramatically reflected in world events. It was most vividly expressed in the phenomenon of democracy: at the turn of 1989/1990, the problem of the "return", or as the case may be, the "import" of democracy into the East of Europe was raised with new urgency; however, at the turn of 1990/1991, the problem was raised in the Persian Gulf with the same urgency, of its "export" into regions in which that typically European cultural value based on liberal individualism and the Enlightenment ideal of human rights attacks another cultural environment.

Notes

1. M. Gorbachev, employing a geographical point of view, limits European culture only to the continent; John Paul II, on the contrary, understands it from a broader perspective as the cultural complex of the North. In the given generalization, the difference between the "European" and "Euro-American (Atlantic)" cultures, however, is not substantial.
2. "Ambae pariter adversae Nationum Consociationes ad effrenatam Populos subigendi voluntatem ... aut ad formas colonicae novae dominationis abditam propensionem more suo usque habent" (*Sollicitudo rei socialis* 1988: 539).
3. "Sunt qui – pauci multa habentes –, cum cultus 'possidendi' ob eversum praestantium bonorum ordinem sit obex, revera nesciunt ad 'esse' pervenire; illique sunt – multi nempe parum vel nihil possidentes –, qui, cum et simplicibus bonis careant necessariis, praecipuam hominum vocationem persequi nequeant" (*Sollicitudo rei socialis* 1988: 549–550).
4. Also the last encyclical of John Paul II entitled *Centesimus annus* was influenced by certain elements of triumphalism. In this encyclical, he has circumstantially evaluated the events of 1989 (1991: 819–830).

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Břetislav Horyna

The analogy of the *proportionalitas*: The coherence between socio-political development and the development of religion in the new socio-cultural reality of Czechoslovakia

The analogy of proportionality (the *proportionalitas*) expresses mutual relations among various phenomena; these relations are present in the same concepts to which may be attributed differing significations, depending on the role played by these phenomena within the cultural tradition of signification. Philosophical speech about socio-political change concerns the processes in the course of which the signification of the phenomena described can be changed. Thus, its expression is not unambiguous and closed into a system of categories. On the contrary, these structures of signification are equivocal in principle because they transcend the language and conventions of thought relating to their previous use. This ambiguousness follows from certain relations between the object (designate) determined by the concept, and its sense, the definition of which is always conditioned paradigmatically but not always empirically. Between the empirical and the paradigmatic ideal, there is often little agreement and the intended sense of notions coincides with their actual signification. As a consequence, a situation marked by a remarkable increase in the number of analogies in speech occurs when the significance of narrativity grows. At the present time, Czechoslovakia is experiencing this expansion of analogical, and sometimes also paralogical, thought about its situation and its visions of the future.

The analogy of the *proportionalitas* between socio-political and religious changes within Czechoslovakian socio-cultural reality makes it

possible to focus attention on some problems, not only in their substantial form concerning post-revolutionary politics but also with respect to the interim intentions of the Czechoslovak science of religions.

"The wind of change has blown in Czechoslovakia and brought democracy, freedom, morality – and the old order has gone with that wind." This statement should not be understood as philosophical analysis but as a typical example of analogous speech that can often be heard not only from journalists but, unfortunately, also from much more responsible quarters. An objection may be raised that such speech represents a normal manifestation of enthusiasm appropriate to the new times. As such, it is understandable. On the contrary, I think it would be more appropriate to clarify the significance of such statements and to elucidate the reasons that these statements appear.

It is necessary to say, in the first place, that when speaking about the changes in the former Eastern-bloc countries, and thus also in Czechoslovakia, that one automatically has macroparadigmatic change in mind, i. e., primarily socio-cultural change besides the socio-political one. To be able to qualify that change, one must be able to determine the main difference from an earlier paradigm.

It can be said *per analogiam*: similar to the difference between the theory of relativity and earlier physics, the difference between socio-cultural paradigms should be definable as well. It is not easy to specify this difference in Czechoslovakia. The basic question is whether changes in the political structure accompanied, for the time being, by not very expressive changes in the economic structure will be sufficient for its specification. It is possible that the questions arising from these changes force a new paradigm too rationalistically.

The change of political doctrine and ideas in Czechoslovakia does not mean that they have become firmly established in a new model of socio-cultural reality. In rough outline, the model remains unchanged. The modern, transcendental, bipolar conception of history, which is fulfilled meritoriously according to the project prepared, remains its basis. From this point of view, if change can be spoken of, it is rather about the change of reasoning, of ideas, of the technologies through

which our society should fulfil its future in ways previously accepted. One cannot speak about change if authoritarianism and the norm-setting activity of these technologies remain. The manner of their assertion is, however, not very significant; so, the formation of a narrow range of possibilities which are presented as politically suitable can be spoken about. It depends on every citizen to identify himself with them if he does not want to be exposed to the risk of his degradation to an amorphous mass of the "silent majority." The freedom of taking such decisions too is authoritarian; its character agrees with the norm-setting activity of the universalistic modernistic paradigm very well. It implies in itself a compulsion to choose that becomes both an obstacle to the possibility of free choice and an accentuate stimulus to the question of an individual sense of socio-political change.

Czechoslovakian society, and I think also those of other countries that have started writing a new chapter of history, have internalized an order that restricts their openness to any ideologically and politically motivated truths. This order has been shaped by a lived, and therefore irreplaceable, experience by which the whole of society has been ideologically simulated. This experience, conventional from the point of view of the modernistic paradigm, restrains the acceptance of any further model for the representation of reality, in which the present order of things is explained again as a rational transformation in itself of a reasonable final effect of socio-political development. The collective includes that empirical *a priori* in the form of structures of its own consciousness; but change in these structures is naturally much more difficult and more long-term than the simple change of political orientation.

In our country, attempts to overcome that *a priori* are often based on the endeavor simply to determine psycho-social, socio-political, and cultural significations, and to define the conditions which enable them to operate from the political point of view, with the impression that we fully understand the contents of our previous experience. The interpretative subordination of society to new structure-forming orders, i. e., to the order of new economic reforms, to that of political-

administrative restructuring, to the order of new social, cultural, and moral priorities represents the most general manifestation of these tendencies. In addition to the rather uncontrollable exaggeration of values, this way is closely connected with a fundamental misunderstanding. The main problem of Czechoslovakia at the present time is not the economic, ecological, or national crises; all these can be solved by available means of science, economics, or politics. The speed with which ideals get old and die in us is more oppressive. In other words, our society suffers from a deep crisis of meaning.

The feeling of a lack of meaning is latent in the whole of modern Euro-American culture. Its intermittent appearance plays the role of an impulse for the self-realizing processes of Modernism. In this sense, it can be explained as the more general manifestation of change within the socio-cultural context. From the Czechoslovak point of view, the evaluation of this phenomenon, and consequently the reactions to it, take place in accordance with a much more closed scheme. The crisis of meaning is being understood as a moral crisis, that is, as the consequence of the long-term elimination of religion from social life. The whole of Euro-American culture becomes identified in this contemporary process of the decay of socio-cultural homogeneity. Discourse about Czechoslovakian socio-political change and, by analogy with it, that of religion, proceeds, from that point of view, as if against the direction of the transformative tendencies of European culture. Accentuating the traditional supreme and final truths which to a large extent have been given up by the cultures of the West, this discourse forms a splendid condition for political moralism and religious fundamentalism.

In general, there are logical reasons for the formulation. Following a long-term retarded development, society prefers now the opportunities of rapid change, both political and spiritual. Superficial and uncritical opinions characterize, therefore, religion as an instrument for quick and reliable spiritualization of the morally arid life. It is presented in the well-arranged, clear, and nonreflected coordinates that correspond to the remarkable conjuncture of interest in religion that earlier was

negated. This situation sows a certain relativism into the position of the science of religions which cannot lead either to the satisfaction of missionary interests or to an establishment of social control by organized religion. It is aware of the compensational character of the increasing religious triumphalism, and is able to assess the psycho-social and cultural implication of eventual identification of a society with its attitudes. By penetrating the exclusive speech of religion, and by its prohibitiveness in relation to absolutization, the science of religions is apparently concerned with political interests, that is, with an accelerated advance of society towards spiritualization. Against the horizon of this political requirement, the situation is even more complicated due to the fact that the spiritualization of life does not appear to be the main feature of Czechoslovakia today. It is a superficial spirituality of a society that remains in the dark.

Many influences contribute to the disorientation of society; some of them are included in the field of religious transformation. I would like to draw attention here both to the growth of religious fundamentalism and the relegation of ideas to new social myths that are based on and conditioned by religion. Both of these phenomena themselves have an exceptional relation to the idea of forming a global, polycentric cultural community. For fundamentalism, this relation can be called "the exclusive opposition" whose endeavor is to establish its own social order. In the same way that religion used to be deprived of the legitimacy of its contribution to the development of culture, today's fundamentalists identify any residual ethical and cultural merits solely with Christianity. Although the propagation of these sentiments is similar to all the great narrative schemes, the latter appears in Czechoslovakia as more or less conditioned by the situation of individual regions. However, the saying that "there is salvation in no one else" (Acts 4: 12) will still be repeated to this society under the difficult conditions of its economic transformation.

The regression to a new social myth based on religion expects also its successful realization. It is characterized by its attempts at social and political legitimization, and at cultural integration that can naturally be

based on the perception that even the technical-rational way of thinking itself takes on a spiritual dimension within the context of the contemporary turn of values. There are problems remaining: this process occurs within a multicultural society which has constituted itself in a certain manner. The religious social myth now enters implosively into the society, however, not as an alternative aware of its compensatory role but as one claiming to become the universal legitimizing form. Czechoslovakian society faces, therefore, a very delicate and sensitive problem of conversion to a religious view of the social world and to Christian values of morality, presented to it not only as the generally accepted demand of spiritualization but also as a real attempt at Christianization.

Similar to all myths, the myth of a general social and moral reform of Czechoslovakia, based on religion, results in limiting and antidifferentiational effects. It does not retain a historical explanation of social and religious phenomena that have significance from a cultural point of view; facing the complexity of a multicultural society, it adopts again new interpretative schemes which, because of their systematic ideologization, are anachronistic, to say the least. Therefore, the tendencies to reduce the plurality of cultural reality appear, in our country, as a romanticism associated with the need for common consensus, for consistency, for some "basic truths", on which we "must" reach an agreement.

The reductionism reviving in Czechoslovakia includes a double risk. On the one hand, only a step leads from it to the doctrinaire universalism of modern logocentrism, newly colored but retaining all its old crises. On the other hand, it can endanger the credibility of one of the basic experiences which enable a discussion of the *conditio humana* and the *conditio loci* of our culture within intercultural communication, namely, the religious experience. By the unpremeditated assertion of religion as the discourse of legitimization about society, the most precious phenomenon offered by religion can be brought to nothing: the phenomenon of giving meaning, of presenting a human being, or a culture, with the sense of what and why it is.

The significance of the religious experience of meaning leads me to conclude that many of the transformed religions in Czechoslovakia will remain phenomena conditioned by the times, derived from the contemporary climate, and expressed in traditional forms becoming antiquated. One cannot reason about connections to socio-political change without taking into consideration changes in the centers of values, standards, and ideas of a complete European culture on the philosophical level. A religious hermeneutics certainly stimulates philosophical thinking about the problems of change and discovers the unique character of its religious reflection. Until now, the religious transformation in post-revolutionary Czechoslovakia has not yielded much material for a philosophical prolegomena to understand contemporary processes. Organized religion, the churches, continue their activities within our society. Their effect does not even pass through the social and cultural filters that is normal in developed and stabilized European states. Their effect enters society, therefore, with their own dynamism and logic; they are not always compatible with the trajectory of political development. This effect joins them to the topical situation of the day by trying, analogically to politics, to integrate society on the level of the national social and political system. Religion contributes to this perspective on the analogy of the *proportionalitas* by its endeavor to unify society through a collective system of values. This perspective leads, however, to the formation of a standardized national consciousness. Czechoslovak society needs, however, an orientation which would transcend our national community, our national "we"; it needs an orientation that would integrate it by forming a collective basis necessary for entering intercultural communication. Such an orientation has not been achieved either through socio-political change or through the transformation of religion.

Jan Szmyd

National history, culture and the process of religious change

There is an essential dependence between national history, culture and the specific character of religiousness. This interdependence is clearly seen throughout the history of each nation within various cultural and geographic areas. On the other hand, there is little significant knowledge about the complicated mechanisms and conditions of this process. Despite some interest in this subject among researchers and the constantly increasing scientific literature on this topic, there is insufficient systematic research, either of detailed empirical and historiographical description or of theoretical approaches. There is also much work to be done in the area of methodology.

The awareness of such need is well observed in the circle of researchers of religiousness in Poland and other East European countries, e.g., J. Mariański (1983; 1986), K. Górski (1986), E. Lewandowski (1987), J. Tazbir (1967; 1987), J. Majka (1984; 1987), W. Pawluczuk (1988), K. Darczewska (1989), W. Piwowarski (1977; 1990), J. Baniak (1990), J. Kłoskowska (1990), and others. But they represent only partial attempts to explain complicated problems.

Some progress towards research in this area may depend on satisfactory answers to questions connected with the uniqueness of the religious situation in Poland; for example:

- why is this religiousness tied so deeply to national, patriotic and political attitudes, on the one hand, but so detached from moral and intellectual attitudes, on the other?
- why is this religiousness so deeply rooted in Polish tradition, custom and ethos, but not deeply connected with everyday life and individual behavior?

- why is this religiousness seen mostly in rituals, pilgrimages and superficial forms of religious worship but rarely in profound religious experience?
- why are religious symbols and institutions of greater importance among believers than such substantive religious concerns as theology, eschatology, mysticism, etc.?
- why has the worship of saints and especially of the Virgin Mary survived so long in Polish religiousness?

The main purpose of this paper is to indicate ways of obtaining answers to such interdisciplinary and comparative research rather than an attempt to give explanations for the problems that face the Polish religious community, and the similar problems of other Eastern European countries: Hungary, Yugoslavia, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Ukraine, Byelorussia, Lithuania, and others. The aim of this paper, then, is heuristic and methodological; it identifies some specified research problems.

We can begin with a short quantitative description of the Polish religious situation:

1. There is a wide identification of Polish society with institutional religion; about 90% of Poles identify themselves with Catholicism, while official statistics identify about 95% of the Polish population with Catholicism. Only about 3% of Poles identify with other religions: the Orthodox Church, Protestantism, Islam, Judaism, etc. (Majka 1984; Darczewska 1989; and Piwowarski 1977, 1983, 1988, 1990).

2. A large number of believers attend religious services. About 60% of Poles regularly attend mass, about 30% attend from time to time, and only 10% do not. In 1984, 79% of the population attended mass, at least some of the time; 78% in 1985 (Mariański 1983, 1986; Kłoskowska 1990 and Baniak 1990).

3. The Catholic Church is a dominant factor of social status in Polish society. According to a poll in April and May 1990, 86% of the population selected the Church as the most popular of all social institutions (from among the government, parliament, army). The Polish

Pope, John Paul II, is the most popular person in Poland (96% of public opinion in 1990). This popularity and sympathy have weakened recently.

We may now qualitatively characterize Polish religiousness. Polish religiousness at nearly all social levels has the quality of so-called "folk" or "popular religion" (Ciupak 1973; Piwowarski 1977, 1983, 1988, 1990; Wierzbicki 1979; Mariański 1983, 1986; and Baniak 1990). This type of traditional cultural religiousness is characterized by, among other things, the priority of the emotional over the intellectual factor, strong attachment to the "faith of the ancestors", little choice of faith, a low degree of religious knowledge, a weak rational motivation for faith, and the virtual absence of deep religious experience. A profound sense of religiousness is shared by only 10—15% of believers (Pawluczuk 1988; Baniak 1990; and Piwowarski 1977, 1983, 1988, 1990). The folk mentality of Polish religiousness is exemplified by ritualism, especially the broad participation of believers in Sunday masses by the majority of Catholics, the developed worship of Saints, the popularity of pilgrimages, the large numbers of traditional national, ethnic and regional elements in religiousness, connections with the rhythm of family and everyday life, the union of religious motivation with national, patriotic and socio-political motivation, strong faith in providence and in the afterlife, an easy confidence in mediation by the Saints, especially the Virgin Mary as patroness, trust in God and the Saints for a solution to various problems of life, traditionalism and conservatism, little openness to religious searching and innovation, a connection of religious forms with political attitudes, and a weak connection with life and moral attitudes (Majka 1984; Piwowarski 1977, 1983, 1988, 1990; and Baniak 1990).

One feature of popular Polish religion is its national and cultural character. The main components of this religiousness are deeply connected with nonreligious elements taken from national tradition, culture and customs. In short, "Pole means Catholic". Its religious practices unite all participants irrespectively of their personal link with religion

and the Church, or of their social class, strata, profession, etc. Participation in them reflects support for patriotic values rather than any acceptance of faith dogmas and moral rules (Piwowarski 1990: 221). "Catholicism in Poland is integrally linked with the Polish character ... Public manifestations of Catholicism as, for example, during visits by the Pope, are, first of all, the manifestation of Polish character. Catholics are those people whose rules of everyday life are entirely different from the Catholic outlook" (Pawluczuk 1988: 26).

Polish popular religiousness, shaped over one thousand years of national and Catholic history, still has its continuity and vitality. On the other hand, there have been significant changes during the last decades. These changes have occurred, however, internally, in everyday life, rather than in such external aspects as religious practices and rites (Piwowarski 1990; Baniak 1990 and Nowak 1990).

One of the most characteristic changes in Polish religion can be named "selective religiousness". Generally speaking, this is a process of the gradual disintegration of the religious attitudes shaped by Polish Catholicism. Increasingly, Polish Catholics tend to reject doctrinal, ideological and ethical religious elements that are at variance with "common sense" and science and to reconcile their religion and everyday life with tradition, customs, family ethos, such critical existential situations as, illness, death, etc. Further, there is a gradual limitation of individual religiousness in its metaphysical, eschatological and teleological aspects, a rejection of a number of fundamental "truths" of the Church, and a relativization of, or divergence from, a number of religious and moral rules, such as, for example, abortion, matrimonial fidelity, etc.

It is characteristic that "selective religiousness" is not the aim as far as religious changes are concerned. There are many tendencies that lead from it to further evolution, for example, toward religious indifference or nonreligiousness, though rarely in the direction of atheism (from about 15—20% of nonbelievers, only 4—5% of the population declare themselves to be atheists).

What are the important factors of the specific religious phenomenon called "Polish religiousness" or "the religiousness of Polish Catholicism"? According to Max Weber, religion in specified historical and cultural contexts influences not only the shape and dynamic of the social, economic, and moral life of a given society, but religion can itself be influenced by the whole historical economic and socio-cultural condition. It is obvious that the essential character of this type of religiousness goes back to national history, cultural tradition and to the peculiar mentality of the society in which such specific religiousness has been shaped. Some of these factors can easily be named but the full register and a proper typology is a question for further research. Here will be mentioned only those factors that have affected or still affect the character of Polish religiousness: the dominance of a peasant strata throughout Polish history, the large role of the gentry and the very weak position of the middle and working classes up to the middle of twentieth century, a serious delay in the economic and cultural development of the country, the loss of independence in 1772 for almost one and half centuries and again during the Second World War (1939–1945), the substantial limitation of national sovereignty and freedom of religion in the years 1945–1980, the strong economic and political position of the Catholic Church during the years of independence and its patriotic engagement in national affairs during the years of lost independence or limited sovereignty, threats to the Polish state as well as to the Catholic religion by states with different faiths (the Orthodox Church, Protestantism, Islam, etc.), the failure of the Reformation in Poland and the triumph of the Counterreformation, intensive industrialization after 1945, the migration of great numbers of peasants to the towns, the radical deterioration of the economic situation in Poland and the pauperization of many Poles in the 1990's.

A Polish mentality or national character, shaped by Polish national history, may be characterized by a tension between idealistic or wishful thinking and a concrete, empirical one, an exuberant imagination, an inclination to improvisation, an excessive attachment to national and religious symbols, in some cases, to the point of abusing them, strong

links with national tradition and the customs of previous generations, an inclination to embellish holidays with exaggerated historical facts associated with state, nation and Church, an easy compliance with emotion and with irrational thought, lack of a sense of reality, an inclination to day-dreaming, romanticism, traditionalism, ebullient individualism, patriotism, a sense of dignity and of national pride, etc. (Tazbir 1987; Lewandowski 1987, Szmyd 1988, Kłoskowska 1990).

Some of these correlations between Polish religiousness and features connected with the cultural and national mentality are obvious and easily noticed but are not properly explained in the scientific literature. Some factors are less obvious and are often overlooked; however, they have a great importance from the scientific point of view. It is notable that some of them have been clearly explained in the Polish historical and social literature. Good examples of features that have been sufficiently interpreted are: the strong ties of Polish national history with religion, especially in the historical and national consciousness, the delay of socio-economic development and a consequent attachment to traditional forms of religion, the close ties of the Catholic Church with the political history of nation, including the struggle for independence and national sovereignty, the slow disintegration of traditional culture forms in intellectual life and the vitality and substantial dissemination of religious traditionalism, a correlation between the level of cultural development of the basic social strata — peasants and people living in small towns — with popular religion. Scientific explanations of the above mentioned correlations in Polish literature also include the strong influence of the gentry and peasantry on the folk character of religiousness, culture and mentality in Polish society (Bystroń 1936; Czarnowski 1956; Ciupak 1973; Tazbir 1967).

An example of a correlation that is not so evident is that of the political and economic interests of the power elite, and the multinational and multireligious character of Poland in the sixteenth century with the famous Polish religious tolerance.

In general, scientific studies in this field are rather full of promise. They allow us not only to enrich our knowledge about these problems,

but also allow us to reveal and formulate some regularity between the specificity of the national historical process and the culture of society and the character of its religiousness. For example, the process of adaptation of a universal religion (here mainly Catholicism) to local ethnic and cultural areas must take into consideration the historical reality of this region, its tradition, the type and level of culture, and the mentality of the nation and its social strata. This process leads to a substantial deformation of the universal religion, to a certain nationalization of the religion, and to the creation of certain religious modifications — in the case interesting us, to the so-called "Polish religiousness" or "the Polish Catholic religiousness".

There is a certain price to be paid for the dissemination of universal religion in given ethnic and cultural regions in particular historical times. The results may be, among others, a shallow and primitive understanding of such religion and its far-reaching confusion with nonreligious elements, for example, with national or political customs. From one perspective it may be good for religious institutions because it gives them a vitality and strength in the profane world but, on the other hand, it weakens its function and role in the world of the sacred.

The changes we have spoken about are not only connected with some sphere of social life and culture and human consciousness being freed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols. They are not only connected with the process where human life is no longer treated in a sacral way and begins to be realized as independent of religious rules and institutions. The point is that the religious, mainly traditional, forms are more and more mixed with nonsacral culture and increasingly become deeply rooted in this culture. This process is seen especially in some areas of the Polish arts, for example, in music, architecture, literature, etc. This process, dependent on social and cultural changes, is a kind of "ingrowing" of the traditional forms of religion into "mass culture". But these matters need, of course, further studies on the place and role of religion in the structure of contemporary culture and civilization. There is also a need for an adequate theory that explains the complicated relations between religion and culture in contemporary historical, national and social processes.

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Irén Lovász

Religion and revolution: A Hungarian pilgrimage in Rumania

This paper, a summary of some empirical data and a few concluding remarks on the religious transformations following the revolution in Rumania in 1989, is based upon my recent fieldwork among ethnic Hungarian Catholics in Rumania. I would like to concentrate on the Pilgrimage at Csíksomlyó.

1. Historical background

More than two million ethnic Hungarians live in Rumania, mostly in Transylvania which had been a part of Hungary for centuries. It was cut off from Hungary after World War I and the Rumanian national state was established by uniting the old Rumanian kingdom (Regat) with Transylvania.

The aim of the nationalistic leaders of the new East-European states created as a result of the Trianon Treaty was to establish national states based on cultural and linguistic homogeneity. The establishment of an educational system and public worship based on a single language proved to be an effective method of suppression.

In Moldavia, which is situated west of the Carpathians and which never belonged to Hungary, there are about 120,000 Roman Catholic Hungarians. Foreign priests had been sent to the Hungarian villages since the seventeenth century. There, Hungarians are still not allowed

to pray and sing in their mother tongue. Church services, common prayer and singing also take place in Rumanian. Public worship in the vernacular is prohibited. In spite of the prohibition, some communities do use their own mother tongue during private worship. It depends on the strength of their awareness of identity and the degree of intimidation. A Catholic priest from Jas called Durnovici is said to have taught that Hungarian was the language of the Devil, and that anyone using Hungarian communicated with the Devil. In this case ethnicity, identity, religion, and language are closely connected, and compelled to have recourse to one another. In Moldavia, for example, religion is the unambiguous sign of ethnicity whatever language the inhabitants speak and whatever identity they may declare. In Moldavia, Roman Catholics are Hungarians. The oppression of language, culture and religion, which has been going on for such a long time, has not only destroyed the mother tongue, but minority groups which declare themselves Rumanian to official census-takers, dare not be sincere even with themselves due to the demagogy and oppression that has continued throughout generations. In the hope of a more comfortable life and a more secure future they force themselves to put up with an imposed foreign identity. In Moldavia there are villages where parents do not even begin to teach their small children Hungarian prayers in order to prevent them from having trouble at school and in church. However, they practice their Roman Catholic religion both at home and in church. Beside this, they participate in the Pentecost Pilgrimage at Csíksomlyó which is the largest religious demonstration of Hungarian ethnic identity in Rumania.

2. A sacred place: The shrine of Csíksomlyó

It is known from the history of religions and cultures that if a community wishes to define their place on the earth, they build up the physical and spiritual locus that can function for them as a link between

the earthly and the supernatural worlds. In everyday life they look for a base of comparison, a sacred, festive place. Sacred location has played a very significant role in human culture. The discovery of a fixed point, the focus of the world can be identified with the creation of the world. Establishing a sacred space has a world creating significance (Eliade 1959: 22).

Csíksomlyó is the sacred place for those Hungarians who lead their lives without changing their old religion. Their culture and spiritual life is strongly determined by the pilgrimage to the Csíksomlyó shrine, which is a deeply Catholic, ritual ceremony. They have been coming here for centuries to obtain absolution, to celebrate, to demonstrate the awareness of their ethnic and religious identity through this ceremony, both for themselves and for others. The different authorities and dictatorships which came into power have attempted to eliminate, or at least to restrict, this tradition. Although some significant changes have been made in the structure of the tradition, the motivation and the content seem, nevertheless, to have remained continuous despite all external efforts.

3. Continuity

Csíksomlyó is situated in the eastern part of Transylvania, in historical Hungary. Today, it is part of the town of Csíkszereda in Rumanian "Mercurea Ciuc". It lies a few kilometers from the border. It is the geographical center of the territory where Catholic Hungarians live in Rumania, at the border of Székelyföld and Moldavia. This is the explanation for their discovery and creation of the focus of their world in that place. It is difficult not to mention the continuous patterns of culture-building related to the Csíksomlyó Pilgrimage when we talk about the history of those Hungarians who live there. The Csíksomlyó Pilgrimage has been held every Pentecost Saturday since 1567. János

Zsigmond, Prince of Transylvania, wanted Hungarians living on that territory to convert to Protestantism because Csík was the only county which the Protestant belief had not reached. The inhabitants had been Catholic since their baptism. Their army fought back the missionary army of the prince. During the battle, all the women, all the children, all the old prayed in Csíksomlyó. The people assigned the victory to the efficacious grace of the Blessed Virgin. The Pilgrimage was first begun by the inhabitants of the villages that had taken part in the fighting. A year later, Hungarians living in Moldavia also participated in the celebration. Thus, the Csíksomlyó Pilgrimage became an event linking the Hungarians in Transylvania (Székelys) and the Hungarians in Moldavia (Csángós). It served as a unifying force for them.

The people there still firmly believe that the Virgin Mary (*Auxiliatrix Somlyóinsis*) defends the Székelys, the Transylvanian Hungarians, and the border of Catholic Christianity. The legends of the miraculous deeds related to this belief are part of the common cultural knowledge. The shrine and its cult of Mary penetrated both everyday life and the festivals, and can be considered the determining element of these people's life-world.

In the view of devout Catholics, churches belongs to a patron saint because it was built in his/her honor. His/her relics can be found there and it is devoted to her/him. This means that the church itself as well as the land is the property of the patron saint. The people who live there are his/her virtual property. Being a devout Catholic is equivalent to being dependent on the patron. It is, however a mutual relationship: the patron saint, in return for being prayed to and honored by the people, plays the role of a mediator between them and God. The patron saint of the Csíksomlyó church is the Virgin Mary, Lady of Hungarians. The statue of the Woman Clothed in Sun erected by the local Franciscans in 1520 has been standing on the high altar of the church ever since.

The local people told me that the statue of Virgin Mary had been found by a peasant while working his land. Then, the church was built in honor of this discovery. The patron has been protecting the local people ever since. She has performed many miracles. This was the sign

that revealed the sacredness of the place. The statue has been venerated as miraculous. People continue making pilgrimages to her every Pentecost Saturday (among other days). People feel attracted to the statue standing at the eastern border of *Regnum Marianum*. Their assembly in honor of it strengthens the awareness of the homogeneity of the Hungarian people.

4. Transformations

After World War I, the Rumanian authorities forbade the Pilgrimage declaring that all rights to hold demonstrations are reserved for the state. The Communist dictatorship regarded it as a dangerous practice and attempted to keep the people away at any price. The last traditional ritual was held in 1949.

The local authorities did their best to prevent people from demonstrating on the roads and in the fields. They blocked the fields, strewed the roads at the border of the village with push-pins, held car-races and bike-races in front of the church and on the roads nearby. Public transport was stopped during the Pilgrimage. The people became afraid. Of course, the number of participants at the Pilgrimage decreased.

People could only come one by one or in very small groups. Sometimes they had to arrive secretly. But they did come. At that time, there were only about 60—70 people in the church on the night from Saturday to Sunday. The custom called *incubatio* (sleeping in church) is still maintained.

In the mid-sixties the authorities began to tolerate the Pilgrimage. They realized that the elderly people who came for the sake of their memories are very persistent. However, they initiated a counterprogram to occupy the youth. They organized an annual festival called "Spring in the Hargita". It was held at the opposite end of the town from the church, in Zsögöd. It was meant to be a major festival to which the

schools and factories had to send participants in the spirit of a newly created folklorism. The organizers stole the secular elements of the Pilgrimage, such as the fairs, tents, buffet, etc. These are the parts of the ceremony outside the church which link the pilgrimage to the secular festivals. The words "*búcsúfia*" and "*vásárfia*" (souvenir from the pilgrimage and fair) have very closed meanings and functions in Hungarian. It was customary to buy something both at the pilgrimage and at the fair for those who were left behind at home. So this secular element of the pilgrimage was taken over by the secular powers. It was also obvious why they established the place of the festival at the other end of the town: it was possible thereby to block the main road leading into town. But the festival could not prevent people from participating in the Pilgrimage. People from the country who were supposed to perform at the festival in the afternoon came to the Pilgrimage in the early morning. They confessed and sacrificed, attended mass, and, then, in the afternoon they danced. Although some formal transformations were made, the Pilgrimage did not stop.

In the late eighties, the number of people coming to the Pilgrimage rose significantly. The totalitarian policy of the authorities had grown so unbearable and obvious that the people began to demonstrate more and more resistance towards it. They had nothing to lose any more; they felt it could not have been worse. As a result of this and some other factors, a revolution broke out in 1989. Before the revolution, the number of younger participants in the Pilgrimage had been gradually growing. There were so many of them that there was not enough space for them in the church for the night. In order to put everyone up in the church, they had to open the choir-stall, the corridors, the sacristy, etc. The reason for the growing number of the young was probably that, in their social, economic, and political desperation, people could turn only to the hope of help from the Virgin Mary. They preferred heavenly help as a solution to their earthly problems.

The Hungarian state was established by Saint Stephen who recommended the Hungarians to the Virgin Mary's patronage. During every historical crisis the Hungarians prayed to her. The *Patrona Hungariae*

motif is one of the main characteristics of Hungarian Maria-poetry, and of the cult of Mary in general. On the other hand, people came to Csíksomlyó in the hope for an all-Hungarian solidarity and for the feeling of unity which is closely related to the idea of *Patrona Hungariae*. Csíksomlyó has undoubtedly contributed a good deal to the symbolic affirmation of Hungarian identity.

The first free Pilgrimage took place in 1990, after the 1989 revolution; the second one was in 1991. There were more than 100,000 participants on the traditionally organized ritual. Compared to the ones that took place during the dictatorship, the ritual went through some formal and structural changes. People again came in well-organized groups, solemnly demonstrating the importance of the event. The elderly still remembered the old traditional forms and rules of the ritual. Though the content remained, the forms were disappearing. That is why people talked about the forms whenever they were asked by an ethnographer.

Following the revolution, the Pilgrimage was organized by the village priests. It was they who asked the people to wear the national costumes that had not been worn for some time. National costumes are a symbol of a romantic commitment to national identity. Even the former Communist leaders of the towns and the villages showed up in Székely costumes at the head of the procession. The procession adheres to tradition:

> Pilgrimages on foot had their ceremonial sequences developed after the Council of Trent, in the Baroque age of the 17th-18th centuries. They were community events, mostly very festively organized. People wore traditional costumes, carried holy symbols (crosses, flags, portable paintings and statues) often under medieval forms of penitence. Depending on the distance between the settlements and the place of pilgrimage the process often lasted for days. People marched on the average 30 km per day which meant being in the procession seven to ten hours daily. The traditional order of the process was as follows: the patronal cross

> was in the lead, followed by the menfolk and finally women, as was the rule for religious liturgic processes. The march was meant to prepare for the meeting both in time and space with the holy place of the Saint. The procession provided time for special long prayers and songs, and for different forms of penitence (fasting, for example). As for space, the procession visited along the way crosses, statues of saints, chapels, churches or settlements as preparation to the meeting at the holy place. The sequence of statues on the road, of chapels, of churches could also reflect carefully constructed mental programs...The songs and prayers recited during the march formed part of a carefully orchestrated program. There are number of manuscripts and printed booklets that preserve the memory of those earlier pilgrimages (Barna 1990: 2—3).

The zenith of the Pilgrimage is the great procession on Saturday afternoon. It is supposed to go around the hill called Kis Somlyó within 3—4 hours. The place and the order of the participating villages are determined by historical tradition.

5. The key-symbols (Geertz 1975: v)

The *procession* and the *calvary* are obvious symbolic acts in which the participants ritually repeat and undergo the suffering of Jesus and all the pains of the Virgin Mary. This phenomenon is typical of every pilgrimage, so I do not wish to go into details.

5.1 *Laborium*

Local people regard "*laborium*" as the main symbol of the Csíksomlyó Pilgrimage. It is a special kind of flag or decorative badge, made of iron-plates and weighing thirty-six kilograms. It used to be the trium-

phal badge of the Roman emperor. In the middle of the Saturday procession, one of the students of the former Franciscan gymnasium carries the *laborium*. Usually, the best student of the gymnasium was allowed to do this. Every year the name of the student who carries the *laborium* is written inside along with the name of the village. It is a great honor both for him and his village and would be remembered for generations. The badge is said to be made in memory of the victory of the Pentecost battle. Its shape and meaning is taken from a beehive. "The church keeps its congregation together in the same way as the beehive keeps its bees." Others think that the beehive-shaped object symbolizes the unity of the Székely people.

5.2 The branch of the birch tree

The pilgrims break branches off a birch tree which they get consecrated at the Pilgrimage and take home with them. The size of the branch depends on the zeal of the person. Nowadays these branches are sold by Gypsy children. The consecration is done by touching the branches against those objects and icons that the people consider sacred. They touch the picture of Saint Francis in the Salvator chapel, and the feet of the Virgin's statue at the altar of the main church. They put the branches in a vase in the corner of the "clean" room (the best room in the house). For each leaf, a prayer is said. After all the leaves are gone, the rest of the branch is burnt. Every sacred object gets burnt including the willow twig blessed on Palm Sunday.

It is also customary to take some branches home for those who did not attend the pilgrimage. The elderly and the sick who could not participate, wait for the pilgrims outside the house. I also heard that some people took branches to the dead in the cemetery. "They have more time to pray".

Personal objects as well as green branches may be consecrated by contact. Pilgrims take handkerchiefs and head shawls to touch the feet

of Mary. They may even take their neighbors' things. "We believe that we can obtain efficacious grace and healing power from Mary". The aura of the sacraments can be transferred from the objects of piety, from the statues and icons, to the personal objects by touching them against each other. Touching the statues, and the feet of the Woman Clothed in Sun on the altar of the main church is an essential part of the ritual. The people stand in line for two days before the statue. All of them want to take home blessed objects.

5.3 Worship at sunrise

The most peculiar event at the Csíksomlyó Pilgrimage is looking into the sun. Early on Sunday morning the people go up the hill, they turn to the rising sun outside the Salvator chapel, wait for the sun, and look into it. While doing so, they pray, and sing hymns to Mary. They used to sing hymns to the Holy Spirit as well. In the rising sun people can see different figures. The Moldavians see a dove, other birds, burning tongues, the appearance of the Holy Spirit; others see the figure of The Blessed Virgin or an angel.

These visions around the sun are determined by the local cultural knowledge of the different communities. Everyone sees what he or she "has to" see according to shared local cultural meanings and symbols of his or her own village or region. And since social identity can be found in shared cultural knowledge and in the performance, appearance and practice of cultural meanings and symbols, these visions around the rising sun are part of different social and cultural identities. Worship at the rising sun and veneration of the green branches connect this Catholic pilgrimage to pre-Christian pagan rituals. We could say that this pilgrimage belongs to Victor Turner's second type of pilgrimage, that is: "Pilgrimages which bear quite evident traces of syncretism with older religious beliefs and symbols. We call these ambiguous and syncretic pilgrimages archaic pilgrimages" (1978: 18).

6. Concluding remarks

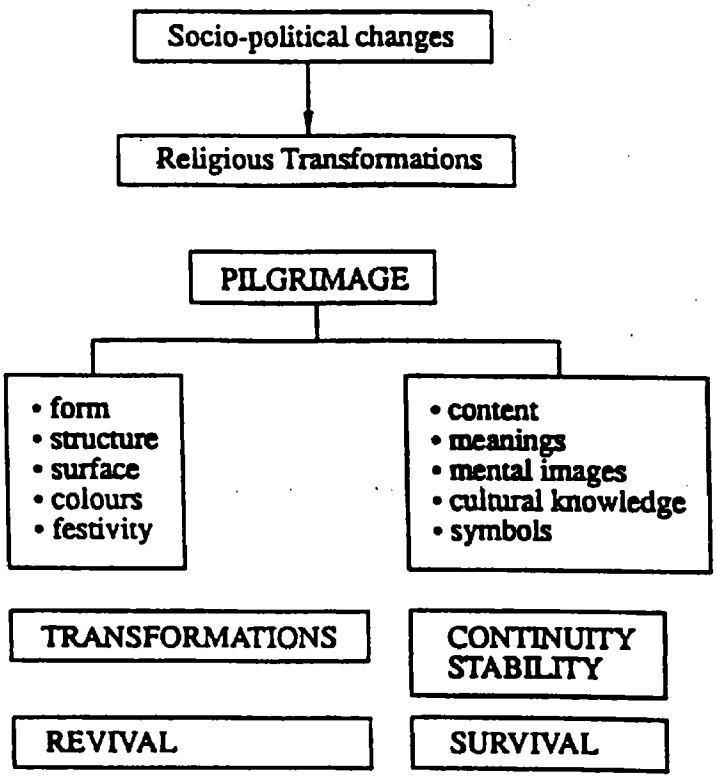
During the period between 1949—1989, the pilgrimage at Csíksomlyó was maintained primarily in private actions and mental processes. As Victor Turner writes, "if mysticism is an interior pilgrimage, pilgrimage is exteriorized mysticism" (1978: 7). This pilgrimage has just been transformed from the state of interiority to exteriorized actions. After the breaking down of the walls of dictatorship and the enjoying of political and religious freedom, the pilgrimage at Csíksomlyó became very much exteriorized. While trying to retain tradition, it breaks with it in some points. This pilgrimage can no longer be contained within the traditional bounds. For example, microphones, amplifiers and loud speakers are now used to broadcast the mass and all of the ceremonies. As everyone listens to the same texts all the time, there is no place for alternative actions and private devotion. It is a kind of forced participation. You cannot be an outsider. In other words, what originally survived as internal, personal devotion, is on the way to becoming an ideological tool in the social arena.

You can hear the voices of this open pilgrimage within a thousand meters of the main church. In 1990, the weather was wonderful and there were about 100,000 pilgrims. The organizers built an extra open-air altar in the garden. In 1991, there was a steady heavy rain, but it did not deter the pilgrimage at all. People fell down with their umbrellas and went on the "*via crucis*" in the mud.

During the last two years, newspapers reported that: "the pilgrimage at Csíksomlyó is revitalized; it was dead for 40 years." I do not think it is a phenomenon of cultural revival, however, because there *were* pilgrimages during the last 40 years. But I do not think that it is a pure phenomenon of cultural survival either (Gagyi 1990). I would rather make a distinction between content and form, meaning and structure. My opinion is that the content and the meanings were continuously maintained throughout these years in the mental images of the people. If a ceremony is prohibited and participation is prevented, people will

concentrate on strengthening the mental image of that prohibited cultural phenomenon. A cultural knowledge about this pilgrimage has been kept alive throughout the generations.

Socio-political changes could effect only the surface, the external forms of this religious activity. After the revolution in 1989, everyone knew what to do and how to use symbols at the pilgrimage. There was a revival of old forms, structures, colors and festivities, and a survival of the content and the meanings of this pilgrimage.



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Dimitry Mickulsky

Muslim fundamentalism in Soviet Central Asia: A social perspective

Under Communist rule, it has been widely assumed in the Soviet social sciences that a developed socialist society had been built in the Muslim regions of the former Soviet Union and mainly, in the Central Asia region — a developed industrialized society, consisting of the working class, the "kholkhoz" peasantry and the intelligentsia. But even then it was quite clear that a society like that existed only partly in Russia itself, Ukraine and Byelorussia, while the Soviet Muslim regions remained strictly traditional.

A prominent Soviet scholar of social anthropology and ethnology, Sergei Polyakov, considers the social order that exists in Soviet Central Asia to be a kind of Asian way of production, so-called, that is characterized by the fact that the subject of material production is not the individual, but the community. A community possesses a certain land area, whereas the means of irrigation traditionally are owned by the state. In Soviet Central Asia, the irrigation systems were first possessed by the local traditional dynasties, then by the Czarist colonial administration and now are owned by the local republican administrations. The land has always been divided into two parts — communal and personal. Communal land remains in the form of *kholkhoz* and *sovkhoz* areas, while personal possession exists in the form of small pieces of land situated by the peasant's houses. A rural community is traditionally called a *kishlak*, while a township community is called a *mahalla*.

Inside the central Asian communities, there are certain castes which play different roles in the organization of the Muslim religious cult.

The names of some of them are the *Khadjies*, the *Ishans* and the *Toras*. Unfortunately their role and functions are still not quite clear. In Central Asia nowadays, the caste to which a certain person belongs is widely mentioned in personal conversation and plays an important role in obtaining a post in state, party, cultural, and other forms of activities connected with modern civilization. It is an unspoken rule that the more noble the caste origin of a person, the higher position he or she obtains. Field research shows that the modern intelligentsia in Central Asia, as well as the bureaucrats, have emerged from descendants of noble castes. In this way, the Soviet system has been adopted by the traditional society of Central Asia.

But Communist rule has succeeded in partly deforming traditional society in Central Asia. Traditional communities are being destroyed. There are several factors that cause this: the cotton agriculture and the breeding of goats and sheep reduce the available land for living; also an uncurbed birth rate leads to the emergence of great numbers of unemployed young people. Additionally, the gap between the rich and the poor increases within the communities themselves.

Because of these factors, large numbers of people, mainly the young, have emigrated from rural areas to towns and cities. They cannot accommodate themselves to the new conditions of life, however, and in most cases are unable even to find suitable jobs. The fact is that these young people have no qualifications for industrial work. As the Soviet ethnologist, Valentin Bushkov, thinks, a newcomer from a *kishlak* cannot become accustomed to the individualistic conditions of city life, since his inner world is conditioned to community forms of living regulated by custom and tradition. As a result of these processes, newcomers to the cities and towns of Central Asia lose their traditional culture but don't acquire a replacement. In other words, they become socially marginalized. Some of them become thieves (largely as members of organized crime), prostitutes or addicted to drugs, while a large part of them join Muslim fundamentalist groups.

Fundamentalism is a type of ideology that appeals to the return to a certain "Golden Age" of a totalitarian social system, when, it is

assumed, such a system was working well. Developments of this system are considered by the adepts of fundamentalism to be a "spoiling" or corruption" of this system. They believe that the contemporary situation represents a moral crisis, which may be overcome only by a return to the "Golden Age". As a term, the notion of fundamentalism first appeared to describe a certain trend in early twentieth-century Protestant theology. It was then extended to the description of a certain type of Muslim ideology and its political-religious practice. And, later, it has been extended still further to other phenomena of cultural and political life. In the contemporary Soviet Union, for instance, the term "communist fundamentalism" is applied to the ideology and political practice pursued by a strictly Stalinist group headed by Nina Andreeva.

In the world of Islam, fundamentalism appeared quite early and was connected with the process of social change that was caused by the spread of Muslim values among the peoples conquered by the Arabs and the emergence of a new Arab-Muslim civilization. One of the first Muslim thinkers to call for a return to the age of the Prophet and his first followers was Ahmad ibn Hanbal. He also condemned the worship of the tombs of Muslim saints and the celebration of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian feasts by the Muslims. The ideas of Ibn Hanbal were developed by the fourteenth-century Muslim thinker, Ibn Taymiyya. And afterwards, as late as the first half of the eighteenth century, these ideas were adopted by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, a theologian from Nedjd, in Arabia. His variant of the Hanbalit *mazhab* ('school') was called by his opponents the "Wahhabiyya" and became the ideological banner of the Saudi state in Arabia.

The followers of Hanbalism and Wahhabism are usually called traditional fundamentalists because, in the long run, they had not seriously altered the traditional society. But with the beginning of industrial development in the framework of twentieth-century Muslim society, a new, modern type of fundamentalism appeared in Egypt with the emergence, in 1929, of "The Muslim Brotherhood", founded by Hasan al-Banna. Severely criticizing the alleged corruption, poverty and westernization of contemporary society, al-Banna urged his compatriots to

return to a state of Islam as it was during the period of the Prophet and the so-called righteous caliphs (Omar, Othman and Ali). The return to the values of this period, as assumed by al-Banna, would be the restoration of true Islamic socialism. Later on, the ideas of al-Banna were developed by S. Qutb, al-Sibai and others. S. Qutb gave birth to a new, more extremist branch of modern fundamentalism. His works have been translated into the main Muslim languages of the USSR and are one of the sources for this type of thinking and practice in Soviet Central Asia. In 1941, "The Islamic League", an organization similar to "The Muslim Brotherhood", was established in former British India by A. A. Maududi, whose works are also very popular with the fundamentalists in Soviet Central Asia.

Nowadays, fundamentalist organizations exist in all parts of the region. Usually they appear in socially and ecologically disturbed areas such as large cities and their suburbs, and in the so-called industrialized zones which bear a mixture of rural and township features. An example of the birth of a fundamentalist organization has been pointed out by my colleague, Valentine Bushkov. Near the city of Hodjent (the former Leninabad) is the Matchi area, the center of which is the town of Novaya Matcha. The majority of the population of this area was forcefully moved there from the kishlak Staraya Matcha, situated higher in the mountains, for the purpose of cotton agriculture. As a result, a large number of people found themselves in a situation of misadaptation to new ecological conditions of life, cut off from the traditions of their ancestors, and became, therefore, a marginal group. That is why, according to Bushkov, a fundamentalist group emerged there.

The leaders of the fundamentalist groups are usually middle-aged people, their ages ranging from 35 to 45. By profession they are unqualified workers and janitors, as well as engineers and technicians. In other words, they are those who felt themselves to be alien to the new, modernized conditions of life. Some of them purposely took marginal professions in order to stress their opposition to contemporary society and to Communist rule, and they studied Islam on their own.

There is, thus, a resemblance between the Islamic fundamentalists in Central Asia and the dissidents in Russia who also took marginal positions as janitors and unqualified workers as a sign of opposition to Communist rule.

The middle strata in the fundamentalist hierarchy are young people 20 to 30 years old. They also may be unqualified workers. Some of them take up trade in light industrial goods (shirts, boots, etc.). They are not members of traditional trading corporations because they have neither the money nor the family connections for that. They have no permanent places in the markets and can easily be recognized while trading near the market doors by their beards and semitraditional, semi-European clothes, a sign of their adherence to a fundamentalist group. It is interesting to point out that I have seen in the markets of Tunisia similar young people, obviously marginals, also occupied with petty trade.

It seems that the fundamentalists of the middle rank control the younger sons of the poor and nonnoble families that comprise the most deprived part of the population. There is some information that the fundamentalist group is connected with rich nontraditional traders who, in spite of their wealth, are not admitted to traditional market corporations and, therefore, feel themselves deprived and marginal.

From the ideological side, the leaders of the fundamentalists in Central Asia generally repeat the ideas of the foreign classics of the movement — the rejection of the surrounding social reality and the rules of contemporary Islam, and call for a return to the prime values of the religion and the Islamic community as a remedy for the improvement of the situation. In some of their writings they call for the installation of an Islamic political order — the Islamic Republic.

The fundamentalists are adamantly opposed to the official Muslim spiritual leaders (working for the government controlled Spiritual Administrative Body of the Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan) and the nonofficial local *mullas*, whom they accuse of corruption, ignorance and servility before the political rulers.

The fundamentalists are also opposed to many customs and traditions that have spread in contemporary Central Asia, such as expensive funerals, weddings and other rituals from which immense profits accrue to traditional religious leaders. They also oppose the traditional Muslim *mullas* stating that there is no need for traditional Islamic *mazhabs* ('law schools') and that every Muslim should appeal directly to the Qur'an and the Sunna. In an ideal fundamentalist Islamic community, there simply is no need for a special *mulla* caste. The fundamentalist movement in Central Asia, as well as elsewhere, is clearly aimed at reforming traditional Islamic society.

On the other hand, the adherents to traditional Islamic dogmas and structures accuse the fundamentalists of striving to make every rank-and-file Muslim a learned *mulla*. And that is partly true since the most active members of fundamentalist organizations are, as a rule, more educated than the nonofficial, or even the official, traditional *mullas*. And this fact attracts some of the elite, especially those from the poorer strata, to respect the fundamentalists, to become members of fundamentalist organizations and to frequent the mosques controlled by fundamentalists.

The fundamentalists began controlling mosques as early as 1986. Sometimes they occupied an empty former mosque and sometimes a mosque controlled by the official Spiritual Administrative Body. In the second case, they drove away the former *imam* and elected an *imam* of their own, who may be dismissed if the believers are not satisfied with him. The fundamentalists follow, of course, the obligation to worship five times a day. And they come to their mosque, as far as I know, for a morning service in order to listen to the sermon of their *imam*. They are also industrious students of the Arabic language, the Qur'an and the *hadiths*.

One of the main elements of fundamentalist upbringing is a study of karate and other far-eastern martial arts. On the one hand, the fundamentalists want to be prepared for the struggle with their enemies and, on the other hand, their groups are influenced in this respect by traditional central-Asian initiation structures, which under the name of

futuwwa brotherhoods are also known in the Arab world. In those structures, which unite young people of a certain age, traditional forms of wrestling were (and still are) practiced. Nowadays in the fundamentalist groups, karate is substituted for the traditional wrestling.

There are other features that make modern fundamentalist groups kin to traditional initiate structures. They consist mainly of young people and are separated from the world of adults, and they widely practice charity — for the members of the initiate groups take an oath to help the poor and the deprived.

These features make fundamentalist groups to a certain extent familiar and acknowledged in central-Asian society. But, on the other hand, it seems to me that the fundamentalist groups bear in themselves a nucleus of new social relations. Traditionally, in Central Asia, he who is more advanced in age is more respected and, of course, is considered to be more pious; in the fundamentalist groups, this value is reversed. The younger generation is considered to possess the true knowledge of Islam, while the elders are presumed to be connected with corrupted forms of religion. Those elderly people who visit mosques controlled by the fundamentalist play a secondary, subordinated role in these groups. That is why a person within the fundamentalist groups, as I have noticed, is respected neither for his age, nor for his nobility, but for his piety and wealth. For these reasons, fundamentalist structures and views may one day radically change the whole of central-Asian traditional society.

Janusz Danecki

The Muslims of Poland: A religious minority in transition

One of the interesting developments in post-war Europe is the unexpectedly sudden growth of Muslim communities in such West European countries as France and Germany. Most striking is the contrast between western societies which are, in ever growing degree, secularized and the traditional Muslim communities where tendencies towards fundamentalism prevail over secularization.

This influx of Muslims to Western Europe is a rather recent phenomenon that began some thirty years ago and at present seems to have stopped. But in addition to these relatively "new" European Muslims, there are a number of old Muslim communities whose presence dates back to the late Middle Ages. These communities arose in the borderlands between Europe and its nearest neighbor, the Ottoman Empire, and before it the Golden Horde. The largest Muslim communities are to be found on the once Turkish territories in the Balkans: Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Albania. Additionally, there are Muslim communities also in territories that were never Turkish, namely, Poland. Their presence here was the result of a complicated tangle of historical, social and political developments throughout the ages. Even though Catholic Poland regarded it as its duty to fight the "pagan" Muslims and thought herself to represent the whole of European Christianity in those wars, the laws issued by the Polish kings, nevertheless, were tolerant to the extent that the Muslims were not only allowed to live there but were also protected from the Sublime Porte. In short, since the fourteenth century, if not earlier, the Muslims have been one of a number of minorities living in Poland.

But what defines a minority as a minority? Crucial, of course, is the fact that it is regarded as such by the majority. In other words, there are subjective as well as objective quantitative criteria involved. Thus the Sunnis in Iraq, who constitute a little less than 50% of the population, would not be a minority while the Kurds – some 10–15% of the population – clearly are a minority. Generally speaking, a minority is a subgroup of a country's population characterized by a number of specific features such as religion, language, nationality, race. Often, more than one feature determines the character of the minority, e.g., the specific features of the minority may consist of its language and its religion. The minority can be a completely isolated group of unique character; it also can form a part of a larger community outside a country, as is the case of the Muslims who, in Poland, are a minority still related to the Islamic world as a whole.

Poland is a relatively homogeneous country; over 90% of its population is Polish, predominantly Roman Catholic. There are, however, minorities of national and religious character. Usually nationality is related to a specific religion. Thus Germans are predominantly Protestant, Ukrainians are Greek Catholic. But there are some minorities which are considered Polish while their *differentia specifica* lies in religion; this is the case of the Jews, Karaites and the Muslims.

These minorities share various features. First, their number is very small, if not negligible, when compared with the 38 million population of Poland. To cite the most optimistic statistical data, there are some 5,000 Jews, a few hundred Karaites and 3,000 Muslims. Secondly, they are purely religious minorities since they regard themselves to be Polish, even if sometimes they stress their specific national origin. Thirdly, they are dispersed throughout the whole territory of Poland and live within the Roman Catholic community. Instead of ghettos one deals here with the phenomenon of *taqiya* (*kitmān*/*ketmān*) – the dissimulation of religion. These religious minorities, in other words, are practically indistinguishable from the majority of the population.

This situation is typical for post-war Poland when major shifts of population radically altered the structure of Polish society. Earlier, it

was much more stable and hence the functioning of these particular religious minorities was also different; especially their national identity as well as linguistic separation from the rest of the population was distinctly pronounced.

The Muslims of Poland are the descendants of various Mongol and Turkish tribes known as Tartars. Their early history on Polish territory is hardly known, although it is certain that these contacts began in the period of the growth of the Golden Horde in the thirteenth century. The khanate that was established after the Mongol invasion was soon transformed internally: Islam was accepted by the Mongol invaders and Kiptchak, a Turkish language, began to be commonly used there. This is why we must speak of both the Mongol and Turkish origins of the Tartars.

The Golden Horde flourished in the territories neighboring Poland and slowly the Turkish-Mongol population began to infiltrate Poland and settle, first in the south-eastern parts and later on its central and eastern borders (Lithuania). These were not the first contacts with Islam, however. Earlier, in the tenth century, Muslim traders were active in Poland, from the west as well as from the east. The Spanish Jew, Ibrāhīm Ibn Ya'qūb, witnessed the creation of the Polish Kingdom, and later, Armenians, Jews, Karaites, and probably Turkish merchants came from the eastern borderlands. These contacts created some minorities, and probably an atmosphere which, in later ages, favored the existence and development of various national, religious and linguistic groups.

But true cooperation between Poland and the Muslims dates from the fourteenth century, the first period of Tartar presence. This period lasted until the sixteenth century and is marked by Tartar participation in the Polish-Teutonic wars. Teutonic order was established on Polish territory in the early thirteenth century, and posed a major threat to the country. The Lithuanian prince Giedymin used Tartar military units against this Teutonic threat. Since the cooperation proved fruitful and the Tartars were able warriors and knights, further plans were made and increasing numbers of Tartars began to settle in Lithuania and

Poland. Their presence may be regarded as symbolic of the Polish tolerance towards different nationalities and the future policy of the Kingdom towards religious and national minorities, a phenomenon unusual in Europe at that time.

The next period of the Tartar presence in Poland, the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries, is marked by the assimilation of the Tartars. It was chiefly a linguistic assimilation, which means that the Muslim minority became Polonized or Lithuanized but retained its religion.

The second half of the eighteenth century marked the beginning of a period that endured to the last war. During this period a considerable growth of town population is observed in which the Tartars not only became landed gentry but also began forming new classes in the towns.

During a final period, the forty years or so following the last war, the Muslim community underwent the greatest changes. These changes involved almost all areas of their life — social, cultural, linguistic. Only the religious domain remained relatively intact: Islam was still the religion of the Tartars.

1. The social context

The assimilation of the Tartars was a rather rapid process. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries most of the Tartars became Polish which meant not only the use of Polish as their language but also the adoption of many typical Polish traditions. This is especially clear in the military; the Tartars matched the Poles in bravery and eagerly took part in Polish expeditions against the Teutonic Knights. This relationship lasted for centuries, and even during the Second World War the Muslims were famed for their valiantry.

It was the last war which completely changed the situation of the Polish Muslims. First, the community was divided between those who remained on their traditional territories, i. e. in the Soviet Union, and

those who emigrated to Poland. Secondly, as a result of this emigration, the community became dispersed throughout Poland. The relative unity of the Muslims was broken with little chance for reunion.

To answer questions about the future of the Polish Muslims, I would like to explain some general problems which the Muslim community poses for research. These problems could be summarized under the following headings:

- the Muslims as a religious or a national minority
- the Muslims and the Islamic world
- the Muslims and other minorities in Poland

2. The Muslims: A religious or a national minority?

For a reader not knowing the intricacies of Islamic polity this question might seem absurd. Is it at all possible to treat Islam as a national phenomenon? Usually, one is inclined to treat Islam as a religion and hence it can be one of the traits of a nationality, but one could hardly imagine a Muslim community as a national one.

If, however, one looks at the history of Islamic movements, especially in the modern world, there are instances of Muslims who regard *themselves* as a nationality. Such was the case of the Muslims in India before the emergence of Pakistan. A number of political leaders spoke of Muslims and Hindus as different nations and not religions. Of course, a decisive role in these declarations was played by political goals. Still they do show that Islam could be regarded as a criterion of nationality. A similar situation is the case of the Yugoslavian Muslims who also regard themselves as a national minority, again for political reasons.

The case of the Polish Muslims is entirely different. At first, in the early fourteenth century, they were regarded as a different nationality, not because they were Muslims but because they were Tartars. After they became Polonized, they became Poles of Muslim faith and were

considered as such by the Polish administration as well as by themselves. This does not mean that they forgot their Tartar origin. Three factors decided the social position of the Polish Muslims: their religion, their Tartar origin and their adherence to Polish nationality. In other words, the Muslims think of themselves as Poles of Tartar origin but of Polish nationality.

This inside view of the Muslims themselves does not necessarily coincide with their treatment by the rest of Polish society. It seems that the Muslims are regarded by the rest of the Poles as representatives of a different national religion which makes them a peculiar group hardly distinguishable from other nationalities. In other words, from the outside Muslims are treated more as a nationality than a religious group. There is yet another reason that they are not regarded as a religion: Islam is rather unknown in Poland.

3. The Polish Muslims and the Islamic world

For centuries, the Polish Muslims maintained close contacts with the Ottoman empire, their natural ally not only as the highest Muslim authority but also as belonging to the same Turkish nation. The *mufti*s were usually educated in Turkey, and they went to the Hajj through the Ottoman territories. It is, however, interesting that the Ottoman Empire, although a natural religious ally of the Muslims, was hardly their ally in political matters. There were instances when the Tartars fought with the Polish army against the Ottomans. National and political considerations were separated from religious ones. The Muslims really thought of themselves as Poles of Tartar origin and Muslims from the point of view of religion.

The religious contacts with Turkey lasted until the last war, after which the situation underwent a change. Secularization and laicization became the official doctrine of Polish post-war policy. The religious

activities of the Muslim minority were discouraged. As no contacts with the outside Islamic world were maintained, the level of Islamic education slowly fell. The Muslims withdrew to their traditional "hiding places" in the villages of East Poland.

A noticeable reversal began after 1967. The six-day war in the Middle East brought a dramatic breakthrough in East European politics: the Arab World became an important ally of Poland. Islam became fashionable and, in consequence, the lore of the Polish Muslims took on political significance. The new situation was not, at first, apprehended by the Muslims. They accepted their new position slowly but soon began to develop new contacts with the Arab World and through it with the Islamic institutions. A complete change took place. While earlier, the Ottoman empire, i. e. Turkey, had been the Muslims' gateway to Islam, it was now the Arab World which took over this function. Contacts with the Muslim World League are maintained through the office of the *Mufti* (Dār al-iftā') of Lebanon. The late *mufti* Ḥasan Ḫālid visited the Polish Muslims a number of times. Some financial help began to trickle in: the Muslims could repair their graveyards, and begin construction of new mosques in Gdańsk and Warsaw.

The Polish Muslims completely changed their attitude towards their own tradition. They became interested in learning the language of their religion, Arabic, which no one in the community at present seems to know. And yet it does not mean that they are eager to renounce their former Tartar nationality.

4. The Muslims and other minorities

The Polish Muslims share a number of features with other minorities, especially with the Jews but most of all with the Karaites. The similarity with the Karaites is structural as well as historical while that with the Jews is only structural.

4.1. Historical similarities

Both Tartar Muslims and Karaites came to Poland mainly from the Crimea in the fourteenth century. They were initially brought as prisoners-of-war, but also settled voluntarily on Polish and Lithuanian soil. Both groups used very similar languages of the Kiptchak branch of Turkic. Since the Polish king Casimir the Great granted *omnes Ruthenos, Armenos, Saracenos et Iudaeos* 'all Ruthenians, Armenians, Saracens and Jews' complete freedom and autonomy, they tended to settle in the Eastern provinces, often in the same towns such as Troki, Łuck, Lwów.

The main difference between the Karaites and the Muslims lay in their attitude towards their respective languages. The Muslims very soon lost their Turkish and became Polonized, while the Karaites retained their language whose disintegration only began after the last war when the Karaites were dispersed in Poland and in Russia very much as were the Muslims.

The disparity between the linguistic attitudes of the two communities is striking. It does not seem to be in any relationship to religion but rather results from cultural and national traditions. It is well-known that the Arabs, who brought Islam to the world, were able to impose not only their religion but also their language. On the other hand, able warriors as the Mongols were, they always accepted foreign religions and languages. In China they became Sinicized, in Persia, Iranized, and in the Crimea, Turkicized. It is no wonder that in Poland the descendants of the Mongols became Polonized. The Karaites, unlike the Muslims, were not descendants of the Mongols and the Mongol tradition did not influence them. Still this is nothing more than a hypothesis based on the seemingly unusual Mongol social history. Obviously, it is very difficult to speak of any consistent pattern in the linguistic attitudes of religious minorities.

4.2. Structural similarities

During recent years, a saying has become popular in Poland: "This is a very peculiar country since there is anti-Semitism with no Jews around." Actually there are Jews but as already mentioned their number is negligible. The Muslim community is even smaller, so is the Karaite. One cannot speak of a clear-cut anti-Islamic feeling comparable with anti-Semitism, still there are strong feelings of distrust directed against the Muslims, a distrust most probably resulting from irrational fears. This was clearly visible during discussions over the construction of a mosque in Warsaw. The people would say: yes, of course, a mosque should be built in Warsaw. But why has it to be built in our area?

A curious phenomenon characterizes Polish society in its attitudes towards minorities. They are accepted in principle and their rights supported, at least, theoretically. When, however, it comes to the application of these ideals, problems may arise. Sometimes reality contradicts these ideals. Pogroms of the Jews or the riots in 1991 directed against Gypsies are examples of this state of affairs.

Again, the relative traditionalism of the Catholic Church is blamed for this intolerance. I would rather see the main reason in the tragically low level of education. Moreover, there is no intellectual elite to create higher standards for human relations.

Religious as well as national minorities face a real threat in Poland. Whether this danger can be avoided is not only a matter of time but also of conscious policy and reasonable counter-measures, which, at present, we lack.

5. The problems of language

Religions often presuppose the existence of a liturgical language which serves the purposes of the faith and its community. This liturgical language can be identical with the actual language of the community,

or it can be different, either orthogenetically, an earlier form of the same language, or heterogenetically, inherited or borrowed from another nation. In the first case, the language still possesses a specific hieratic character. It is thus bestowed with special significance although it needs explaining exactly as do the Scriptures. In the case of an orthogenetic linguistic situation, the hieratic language is usually archaic. Biblical Hebrew, for example, is perceived as archaic by modern Israeli Jews. Similarly, Latin was, until recently, the language of liturgy in the Catholic Church. It was not understood at all, but it performed its hieratic functions very well.

The language of Scriptures as heterogenetic is typical for a number of Muslim nations. For all Muslims except Arab Muslims, Arabic is a foreign language. Still, this language, very often not understood at all, has tremendous influence on the believers. It seems that its hieratic function is enhanced by the fact that it is foreign and not readily understood. Just because of its mysteriousness the believers identify themselves with it.

Arabic was practically always foreign to the Tartar Muslims. It was also foreign for the Kiptchaks and later on to the Muslims with Lithuanian, Polish or Byelorussian as their native language. In other words, the language of Polish Muslims was always heterogenetical and, typologically, the situation remains unchanged.

As mentioned, the existence of a liturgical language not understood by the believers creates a necessity for interpretation and, hence, the need for a caste of interpreters to explain the Scriptures to the believers in a language understood by them. Consequently, a clergy arises, which classical Islam avoids. Curiously, this group of intermediary servitors of the Scriptures appeared only where Arabic was foreign, i. e. in Shi'ism. I would not venture to maintain that this was the main reason for the existence of the Shi'ite clergy, but it certainly was an important factor.

Although the Polish Muslims are Sunnis, they still needed people to teach them their religion and explain the Arabic texts, from the simplest prayers to the Qur'an. These men did not, however, form a

caste since there was no independent system of religious education. The *mufti*s were usually educated outside Poland, in Turkey. Their number was small but sufficient. After the last war the situation changed. The lack of contacts with the Muslim world in the first twenty years after the war and the death of a number of learned Muslims during the war caused a difficult situation. Soon there was no one knowing Arabic and only the oldest people were able to read and recite the Qur'an.

Since 1971 the community has had no *imam*: he was replaced by the Supreme Muslim Council, Najwyższa Rada Muzułmańska, which has a president who performs the functions of an *imam*. Only the six regional communities have their own local *imam*s. They do not, however, know Arabic, and their chief duty is to perform religious duties and prayers, upholding, thereby, the traditional civil character of Islam. There is, however, no religious hierarchy.

In a country like Poland, where preconceptions borrowed from the Catholic Church prevail, the Muslims must be regarded as representative of a religious group. This external viewpoint influences the Muslims themselves who tend to regard themselves as a religious organization like the Catholic Church. They are further limited by the secular laws of the country which treat religion as a church, not as a broad system that controls the whole of a believer's life.

The fact that Islam proposes a system of social institutions completely different from that of Catholicism leads to the peculiar situation of the Polish Muslims. Many factors originating in social, religious and even linguistic situations limit their functioning in this society. It is a minority with an interesting past but with a difficult present. The present is marked by a typical growth in the religious functions of society as is clearly seen in the case of the Catholic Church in Poland. A minority such as the Muslims can hardly compete with Catholicism in Poland; since the Islamic revival began, changes and developments among the Polish Muslims have not been spectacular.

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Gary Lease

Delusion and illusion, false hopes and failed dreams: Religion, the churches and East Germany's 1989 "November revolution"[1]

> *I don't want to just hear about revolutions. All we see or hear is revolutions. I'm sick of them ... They're beautiful. Really. For quite a while. Then they go bad.*
>
> Ernest Hemingway

1. Revolution

In an age which seems to invite characterization as one of "revolution", Hemingway's contrast demands clarification. Wherein lies the "beauty" of revolutions, and how and why do they "go bad"? First, however, there must be some agreement on what is meant by revolution. It is a term which vacillates with increasing meaninglessness, from signifying all change to functioning as a label for very specific moments of upheaval. Like "religion", revolution has come to mean everything and nothing.

Following the lead of Althusser, I wish to see revolution as an inevitable result of human consciousness. Among the key functions of consciousness is to process the myriad stages of identification with which human beings construct the world around them. As the chief tool for doing so, consciousness makes use of definition, or the establishment of relationships as "objects" which are consequently subject

to control. To identify both self and world and have them remain stable, consciousness stamps them as independent and external, rather than seeing them as the product of cultural and representational imagination. As a result, humans are constantly bringing forth new identifications and linking them to previous such identifications in a feverish attempt to provide definitions capable of covering all possible experiences. Such a plurality of definitions, in turn, demands a catalogue or ranking of their relationships to one another; tests are produced which allow one to locate new definitions within the catalogue.

The presence of such catalogues in human lives, and more particularly in commonly shared human lives, leads inevitably to a struggle over the power to control their formation and their application. Who, for example, defines the ranking within a particular catalogue? How, and with what force, is that primary definitional act exercised? The answers to these questions form the stuff of ideologies, or the dynamic process by which such catalogues cease to be that but, rather, become self-evident and fundamental to human existence. Such self-evident systems of definitions must constantly be legitimated in order to head off the collapse of the intricate patterns of relationship which make up the supportive ideologies. Any society, I would argue, is forever and inextricably bound up with the process of sustaining its basically shared catalogues of definitions for human experience of the world. Any society, in other words, is always producing and legitimating sets of ideologies.

In order to sustain such sets, or systems of ideologies, authority is needed to impose them on those segments of a society which may have constructed quite different, or variant catalogues of definitions. Force may be employed, and the role of law codes to regulate the function of such force in maintaining broad-based ideologies is well known. "Constitutions", for example, have as their reason for being the provision of such a self-evidently understood and accepted framework for ideologies and their attendant rules of enforcement (law), that the very basis of the societies for which they were created cannot be called into question. "Religion", on the other hand, frequently serves as the label

for those systems of legitimation which attempt to anchor their foundation outside of, or external to, the ideologies being legitimated. In either case, stability is the desired product. And stability promises a constant, unvarying pattern of relationship between inside and outside, or more prosaically, between self and others. In overcoming separation and distinction, stability of ideology becomes both inclusive and exclusive, that is, it assumes all experiences available to the society in question and rejects all those experiences which might be used to question the accepted set.

But what happens if such questioning does occur? What happens if the stability, no matter how powerfully enforced, breaks down and the catalogue of definitions which makes up a society's ideologies no longer is self-evident? Such a lack of order leads quickly to chaos, or to the competition of ideologies and their constituent definitions. Language and, therefore, communication collapse by absorbing the very elements of such chaos. The disintegration of communication, in turn, accelerates the descent into chaos by breaking the connections between humans, or others, on the one hand, and the world, or the location of those humans, on the other (Todorov 1984). Religion, on the other hand, is always the preeminent science of definition and is, therefore, opposed to such chaos. Together with law, it works tirelessly against the dismantling of ideological systems, trying to stem any encroaching chaos by shoring up the once self-evident catalogues of definitions which are the substance of a society's ideologies. For once those ideologies are called into question, differences emerge, and those differences lead, in turn, to inequality; such inequalities can only be erased through the enforcement of shared definitions, in other words, through the destruction of differences and the variations which lie behind them.

In this view, then, revolution can only be the subversion or destabilizing of ideological systems. It is constituted by the effort to rearrange the relationships between and among the definitions which are located at the self-evident base of a society's shared ideologies. Through perception, language, and communications such a rearrangement, or revolution, must be performed or forced upon a society. First, the present

system of ideologies must be destabilized and thrust into chaos. Then, there must be an imposition of a new such set of ideologies. And finally, there must be initiated an on-going process of legitimation in order to ensure the continuation and stability of the newly established set of systems. Revolution, in order to be successful, must disrupt self-evident relationships by breaking down distinctions, or even eliminating them. In other words, revolution inverts the hierarchy of forces within the society in which it occurs. Thus revolution always involves power and its relocation; modification or change of what is allowed to count as self-evident; violence or the destruction of relationships and the imposition of new relationships; and the reversal of the process of stabilization. Revolution is nothing more, but above all nothing less, than an act of redefinition in absolute inscriptions.

In summary, revolution does indeed involve change, but change of a most fundamental and far-reaching sort. It is nothing else but a shift in the most basic patterns of relationships which represent power in a society and which enable members of that society to form self-evident, or unexamined identifications and their definitions valid for all relationships. These ideologies are key to the workings of a revolution. And a consciousness which is revolutionary is the acknowledgement that such ideologies can, in fact, be constructed, and therefore can be destroyed. The absolute reference point of such revolutionary consciousness and its performance is thus constitutive of human existence for it is through revolution that the source and function of ideology is revealed. As an on-going event in human life, revolution is also the basic content and substance of history, and as an absolute redefinition, it is the ever-present shadow of "religion". Where you find history and religion, revolution lies both at their roots and is not far behind. Hemingway was right: revolutions can be beautiful for a while, but then they go bad, because they themselves always turn into the very stabilized systems of ideologies which, in turn, call forth future revolutions. Like Frazer's priestly king of Nemi, "surely no crowned head ever lay uneasier, or was visited by more evil dreams" than that of a revolution (Frazer 1922: 1–2; Touraine 1991: 20–21).

2. Germany and revolutions

The recent upheavals throughout central and eastern Europe, and more particularly in Germany, make the question of revolution more than academic. Certainly there is widespread agreement that this part of the globe has been visited by revolutions from time immemorial. But is that actually the fact? And more specifically, can one establish a pedigree of revolution for Germany? I think not.

Current time lines usually locate the beginning of the "modern" age somewhere in the sixteenth century. An almost universal focus for the drawing of that boundary is found in the so-called Protestant Reformation, or as others will have it, the Protestant Revolution. But a split or reassignment of the powers of control in late Medieval German society surely does not mean a revolution, above all in the sense I have given it here. It is often forgotten that Thomas Müntzer did not win, and that Luther did. The consequences of Müntzer's destruction and Luther's triumph are that a revolution, or fundamental change in the self-evident ideologies underlying contemporary German, and broader European society, did not take place. In fact, the primary result of the Protestant Reformation in Germany was the creation of an even more powerful state/church combination than had existed before with the Roman Church; in other words, the basic set of ideologies which ruled society prior to the Reformation was reinforced, not done away with. The Protestant Reformation of sixteenth-century Germany was everything but a revolution (Sohm 1892: 460–700).

And certainly the participation of the Prussian state in the struggle against nineteenth-century Napoleonic domination of Europe led, as it did elsewhere, to a fundamental recovery of those catalogues of definitions which had functioned in the German states prior to the French Revolution. Indeed, the heritage of the French Revolution, so slippery in its effects and uncertain in its staying power, was in Germany ultimately superficial. The pre- and post-March "revolts" in Germany of 1848 certainly did not lead to a revolutionary overturning of its

ruling ideologies, but ended in the establishment of Prussian hegemony over most of the German principalities.[2] Bismarck's "revolution from above" may have raised the question concerning the ruling ideologies of Europe at the end of the nineteenth century, but it also answered it in the negative. It would take forces outside of Germany to unleash genuinely effective revolution within the European structure.

In the wake of the Russian revolution of 1917, the German attempts to follow suit appear crude and inefficient. The "republic" announced from the balcony of the *Reichstag* on November 9, 1918, the Spartakus "revolution" of 1919, the stumblebum Weimar Republic which succeeded them and the previous empire: all these swam in a soup of revolutionary rhetoric but not of revolutionary performance. It was first the ascendancy of the National Socialists in 1933 that brought revolution to Germany. Hitler, and above all Goebbels, wanted revolution, they worked for revolution, and they achieved revolution. Unlike the theater performances of the past, this was the real thing: power effected change which in turn unleashed violence and a fundamental reversal or redefinition of the sets of ideologies which governed Germany's society. In the history of modern Germany, the National Socialist hegemony of 1933—1945 remains that country's single most authentic revolutionary event. Everything else pales beside it (Lease 1977).

3. Eastern Germany and revolution

And yet, from all sides the cries have gone forth that the social and political upheavals in eastern Germany in 1989 and 1990, which in turn led to the unification of West and East Germanies, were in fact the "first peaceful" revolution in German history. The reason for this, according to these analyses, is that the Christian churches, primarily the Protestant Churches, were the primary force and agents behind the wave of change.[3] Even Petra Kelly, lately a leading figure in the German

Greens Party, speaks of the "East German Revolution of ... November, 1989 – the first Revolution on German soil ever ..." (Kelly 1991: 17).[4] Let me be blunt: there was no revolution in 1989 and 1990 in Eastern Germany, and what upheavals and changes did occur were not in the main the result of religion or the churches (Kramer 1992: 42–43).

The Peace Prayer movement, in motion since 1980, is sometimes cited as the beginning of the Protestant Church's involvement in freeing East Germany from the oppression of its government (Wilson 1990). And yet, it is important to note that most documentations regarding the so-called revolution and the role of religion in it, first begin in 1989. The reason for this is simple: throughout the decades since the early 1950s, the Protestant churches in East Germany had walked a delicate tightrope between opportunistic appeasement of the government, and above all the SED-party, on the one hand, and popularly supported opposition to the same bodies on the other (Pollack 1990: 239). This ambiguity allowed the churches to exercise whatever effectiveness remained to them: as a valve, they helped relieve pressure from within by providing protected space for those who sought economic and political change. Since open opposition was not possible, such "private and unofficial" protests were the only avenues available to the people (Thompson 1991: 49).[5] But the churches were only able to survive by not taking any official stance, and above all by not identifying, or helping formulate such opposition. East Germany, it must not be forgotten, was a completely closed-off society. One went along with the demands of the government because there was simply no other choice: one could not leave.

This position was also that of the church. Its role was reduced to the level of being a site for pluralistic thought, both political and ideological, but it was not itself a source of that thought (Pollack 1990: 237, 239; also Reich, 1990: 70–71). In fact, one could say that the churches, despite having become places of communication, had lost the power struggle with the SED-party. If 81.6% of the population belonged to the Protestant churches in 1950, by 1964 a quarter of those had left. And by 1970 just over 40% of the population retained

membership. In 1980 just 29% remained, and in 1988, a year before the upheavals, only 23% (Pollack 1990: 237, 239; also the discussions in Helwig–Urban 1987). Nevertheless, the churches did preserve their function as pressure release valves, or as some have put it, as representative sites of modernization for society at large (Führer 1990: 17). This was, of course, an important role, but not one which could lead to revolution. The history of the East German state is marked by the constant struggle to maintain stability; this was achieved by banning all change. The Protestant Churches were not excluded from this struggle, and their need to fit into the system while also providing an alternative to the very system they were part of, led to their being powerless when it came to action (Reich 1990: 72). As late as Fall 1988, the leading church periodical in East Germany, *Church in Socialism*, was debating the meaning of its very name; there was a desperate need to wring from its schizophrenic position some long-term stability. The needs of the church were rapidly becoming identical to those of the Party! (*Kirche im Sozialismus* 14 (1988): 180–185. Also, Kusche 1990: 53).[6]

If the churches had never been effective with the large bulk of the population in East Germany, and therefore cannot be viewed as the engine which drove the societal upheavals of Fall 1989 (Pollack 1990: 240, Führer 1990: 23), where did the causes lie? Since the churches did provide space for opposition groups to form, but expressly refused themselves to form such opposition, what finally gave the impetus to that resistance? Clearly it was not the oft-repeated appeals of church leaders to non-violent demonstrations. Both in Leipzig and in Dresden, and in the main case in Berlin, it was the police and government authorities who declined to exercise violence. Only then were church representatives able to take up non-violent dialogue as a tool for discussion (Pollack 1990: 241). Remember that the East German populace had already learned the values of justice, non-violence and freedom from the very socialistic propaganda against which opposition was now arrayed. Even in East Germany there was something approaching a

"civil religious acceptance of ethical ideals, norms and values." This explains best the massive protests against the application of force in putting down demonstrations, and not the preaching of a church which refused to identify with opposition to that socialistic ideal (Pollack 1990: 242).

And if it was not the churches who led to a stage of non-violent dialogue, which in turn led to the dismantling of the state, then there are only two sources remaining which could have propelled events in the direction they eventually took: the lack of any central legitimation from Moscow for the use of military force, on the one hand, and the opening of the Austrian-Hungarian border, on the other. There would seem to be little doubt, in the first instance, that Krenz and Mielke – Honecker was already gone – had arranged for a so-called "Chinese solution", a reference to the June 1989 suppression of demonstrations in Beijing. But the Russians refused to cooperate and the East German military could not be trusted. In the "hot" month from October 9, 1989 in Leipzig to November 9, 1989 in Berlin and the collapse of the Wall, the SED-Party leadership had counted on forceful legitimation of their position by the Russians. Such support was not forthcoming; Gorbachev left them in the lurch. They had become expendable (*Die Welt*, May 21 [1990]: 6). The demonstrations had not become unmanageable, at least not for Russian tanks. But the decision to use them was not present, and that made all the difference in the world.[7]

In the second instance, the opening of the Austrian-Hungarian borders by the Hungarians in September 1989, after a massive exodus of East German citizens the previous month, one finds, in my judgment, the key to the entire event. This opening of the closed system, the breaking of the logjam, gave the major impetus to the development of a protest movement which accelerated with such speed that within two months the government had been paralyzed and the Wall between the two Germanies broken down. But the transcendence, if you will, of the totally unimaginable was not grasped as a religious event but only as the partial collapse of a system which had been maintained artificially – as all systems of ideology are. But it was hardly a revolution, and it certainly was not a Protestant Revolution (Pollack 1990: 242).[8]

The results are not far to seek. Though the churches gained a great deal of trust during the two years of upheaval, they are now in a clear position to lose that trust quickly. Much criticism has been leveled at the Protestant Churches in eastern Germany for so quickly demanding that the state-supported taxation system current in western Germany be introduced into the new states. Such a move concretizes the dilemma in which the churches find themselves. Without adequate, or even bare financial resources, they will be unable to retain their position as locations of pluralistic exercise; and the more democratic and pluralistic conditions become, the more people will see that they do not need the church for that purpose any longer. There is an ebbing level of sympathy for the churches in eastern Germany; it will never be a *Volkskirche* again (Zeddies 1990: 67). There certainly is not a rush to the churches. The problems of the church, viewed openly, are those of the larger society.[9] The majority of the eastern German population long ago abandoned its *volkskirchliche* customs and habits; in their place they have accepted sober socialistic ones. Ideologies, as Peter Berger has reminded us again and again, are exchangeable (1954: 182–183). Certainly if the churches think that their mission now is to proclaim an ideology of faith which is easily convertible with the "Pepsi Cola Culture," then they drive themselves *ad absurdum* (Führer 1990: 24; also Urban 1990: 87–88).[10]

"Was it really a revolution?", writes a colleague from former East Berlin:

> The French in 1789 let heads roll and radically cleaned house. In honest Germania there is nothing like that. So former high officials now earn a lot of money with their memoirs and "revelations"... Girls and young women who earlier served as the mistresses of military officers and party functionaries have now switched clients. What do we need morality for? That is preached now only by a few pastors to a few lambs in the church. A wild spectacle awaits us in August. That's when "Old Fritz" [=Frederick the Great] and his father, the "Soldier King", come home

> to Potsdam. Frederick II will be buried at Sanssouci, just as he originally ordered it in his will. The bells will ring, there will be torchlight parades, a great hurrah will take place: Frederick didn't like any of that. Is this all an alibi for a new fascination with Germany? Shouldn't we respect and treasure all nations and their cultures?...For me — and for many of my generation — unification comes late, but still not too late![11]

But that unification is not the product of a revolution, not by the broadest stretch of imagination; it is rather the strengthening of ideologies and patterns already present. And that unification is not the result of religion and the churches; it is rather the vehicle for their manipulation and control. "Our faith is getting involved", to quote the title of Hildebrandt and Thomas' (1990) documentation of the "Protestant Revolution".[12] The price paid for that involvement, however, is not that of revolution but of the surrender of power.

Notes

1. A revised version of this paper was published under the title "Religion, the churches, the German 'revolution' of November 1989" in, *German Politics* (1992): 264–273.
2. A marvelous play on this very unrevolutionary turn of events can be found in Lothar Gall's title to his superb biography of Bismarck: *Bismarck. Der weiße Revolutionär* (Frankfurt 1980).
3. This claim is found everywhere. See, for one major example, Rein 1990; or dealing with the broader spectrum of East Europe, Prins 1990; and James 1991, who should know better, recently uses the term. A much more sober assessment, though tinged with unproven shades of gloom, is by Botz 1990.
4. Of course Kelly does not view the churches as the main force behind this revolution, but instead the ecology and peace groups from within the

former East German state. And the "East German Revolution" was first halted and then snuffed out by the intrusion of the West German government (1991: 18).

5. Thompson is speaking first and foremost of the role by which environmental matters had become locations of protest activities, both in Poland and in East Germany. But the churches played this same role, too.
6. The recently published surveys of documentations surrounding the State Security Office's dealings with the churches demonstrate how many sources of information for the use of the government were available from within the churches ("*'Ich liebe Euch doch alle...' Befehle und Lageberichte des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit*" ["'But I love all of you...' Orders and reports from the Ministry of Internal Security"], 1990). Nevertheless, one commentator still is optimistic: "social-ethically motivated groups, both on the edge of, and in the Evangelical Churches, theologians, and other intellectuals made possible the Autumn Revolution for the Democratization of the political system by their activities, and contributed in a major way to the removal of the Stalinist 'system'." Indeed, according to this account, it was these groups who were the most important inner-political "enemies" of the state: No one else carried the main burden of the opposition; no one else formulated the political goals and was ready to make sacrifices. Now, after it is all over, everyone wants to have been a part of it. For the churches the consequence is key: They must force the new state to acknowledge the need, and the place of "peace prayers." In other words, the churches must retain a major political role: For the future the needs of the state must become those of the church! Cf. Neubert 1990: 70—75.
7. This can be most clearly seen when we contrast the suppression of the "revolts" — note the violence — in Berlin of 1953, in Budapest of 1956, in Prague of 1968, and most strikingly, in the recent coup against Gorbachev himself of August 1991, to the lack of such action in East Germany of 1989. Stalin's old chestnut might be paraphrased as "How many tanks do the reformers have?" Answer: None. Implied is the mate to that question: "How many tanks do the state authorities and army have?" Answer: All of them.
8. Indeed, others would have us understand the change of systems in eastern Germany as the result of a change in child-rearing practices! Cf. deMause 1990.

9. For example, Cantor Roitzch at the church of St. Thomas in Leipzig, scene of some of the most vocal demonstrations in 1989, recently had to resign his post because for decades he had been feeding information to the State Security Office (=Stasi); not only were charges brought but they were proved, and he had to admit his complicity (personal communication from Horst Wolf, a Berlin art historian, to Gary Lease, letter of 6 July 1991). Those pastors who worked for the Stasi or were energetic followers of the Socialist Unity Party (=SED) were known as the "Blockflöten," or "recorders."
10. What else can it do in a situation where 150,000 families have already registered their children for the 1990 Jugendweihe or state-instituted substitution for the church sacrament of confirmation? That is between 96–98% of those eligible for that event. It is obvious that the state ritual has become part of the identity, tradition and history of eastern German society, while the church's status has slipped. Cf. Urban 1990: 87–88.
11. Horst Wolf to Gary Lease, 6 July 1991. Another communication from Christian Schultze, one of the members of the first, and only(!), directly elected parliament of the former German Democratic Republic, highlights the judgment that "large portions" of the church, as well as the intelligentsia, failed miserably during the period of upheaval (Schultze to Lease, 9 June 1991).
12. The editors wish to describe the role of the Protestant Church in the early stages of the "process of reform" in 1989, a much more nuanced definition than that of "revolution."

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Peter Antes

Theology of liberation and the Protestant monastery of Loccum in Germany

1. Religious change and persistence in a world in transition

The study of religion has a special interest in the historical development of religions as well as in the particular denominations of religion. Unlike Christian theology which traditionally concentrates on the creed as an eternal truth claim, this type of study focuses on the history of dogmatic formulae such as, for example, the dogma of God incarnate in Christianity, by pointing out to what extent Hellenistic Greek philosophy has been involved in the process of the formation of the creed (Hick 1977). It also applies to religious practice by showing that an adaptation of pagan concepts may be noticed in the Catholic cult, as in the case of Mexico's Catholic folk religion (Nebel 1983: 229–244). And changes finally can be observed with regard to social claims, such as the human rights that were rejected by Pope Pius VI in 1791 but nowadays serve as a reference in many papal encyclicals.

Religious change is obviously striking and can easily be shown but it is rather rare for Christian theologians themselves to declare that it is a matter of principle for an adequate interpretation of the Biblical message in a particular social setting as did Gustavo Gutiérrez, the "father" of the so-called theology of liberation in Latin America. Persistence, on the contrary, is not only asserted in dogmatics but also as existing in reality. Consequently, this paper will give a concrete example for each of the two cases. For the former, it will refer to Latin

America's theology of liberation, and for the latter it will show that the Loccum Monastery in Germany became Protestant without ever officially breaking with its Cistercian heritage. These two examples will finally help systematically to redefine religious change and persistence either by warning against radical changes or, what seems more likely, understanding that changes occur when the needs of communities and/or individuals cannot otherwise be fulfilled but they do not if these needs are fulfilled so that there is no concrete urge for change.

2. Theology of liberation in Latin America

Theology of liberation presents a striking example for the changing of religion in a world in transition. Unlike the change observed, for instance, through the Hellenization of early Christianity, the main principles for changing Christian theology in Latin America were, as publicly admitted by Gustavo Gutiérrez, consciously put forward by theologians. The consequences of the application of these principles will then be enumerated briefly with regard to the concept of God and man, and it will finally be demonstrated that these ideas transcend the frame of theology of liberation by being accepted in official documents, such as that of the Third Bishops' Conference held in Puebla in 1979.

What theology of liberation really intends to do, is expressed by Gustavo Gutiérrez in an interview where he describes the different types of questions asked in Europe and in Latin America:

> I think that the largest part of European theology answers the question of the non-believer, the non-believer indeed is the great questioner of European theology. And what the non-believer is calling into question is fundamentally the world of belief, the religious world, and, therefore, a good part of the theology of belief has changed into what we once called the "theology of

> secularization", or, it is based on the difference between belief and religion, etc., thus trying to answer the questions which are put to the religious world by the non-believer. In reality, it is the question which Bonhoeffer asked with such accuracy, namely, how to speak about God in an adult world. I believe that this is in fact a great question for a good part of European society. The question which is put to us in Latin America now is not so much that of the non-believer but that of the non-person (*'no-hombre'*). The one who questions us is much more the one who is not seen as a human being, but marginalized and hardly aware of being a person. For us this non-person does not so much call the religious world into question; the non-person is first of all questioning our economic, political, cultural and social world, and so forth. Therefore, if theological reflection is undertaken, it is not intended to hold to the line of the theology of secularization but rather to the theology we are talking about, namely, the theology of liberation. Our question is not Bonhoeffer's (how to speak about God in an adult world) but how to say to the non-person that God is father, how to say to the person who is not regarded as a human being in our society that he or she is God's son or daughter (Gutiérrez 1975: 29–31).

Theological reflection, consequently, has a precise *Sitz im Leben* and, according to Gutiérrez, it is the task of theology "to (re)think belief in the context of a given cultural world. In the theology of liberation, one has to think belief starting from the cultural world I live in, namely from the praxis of liberation" (Gutiérriez 1975: 29). And since the living conditions in Latin America are due to oppression in this particular world, the praxis of liberation becomes automatically a political issue. "Being non-political means being with the established power" (Gutiérrez 1975: 25). The alternative is, thus, to make a political choice in every case, either in favor of or against the establishment and the existing system in the country.

To answer theologically the challenge of the non-person implies a clear statement in favor of love, the characteristic sign of the disciple

of Christ and the main criterion for salvation according to the report on the last judgement in Matt 25. In his book entitled *A theology of liberation*, Gutiérrez argues that liberation is the modern equivalent of what is traditionally called salvation and that this message of salvation/liberation was understood as being the Apostles' main message from the very first beginnings of Early Christianity onwards. And Gutiérrez has been followed in this understanding by all theologians of liberation, including those of other areas of the world such as, for instance, India (Kappen 1977; Amalorpavadass 1981).

It is not the intention of this contribution to illustrate the development and variety of different positions in the Latin American theology of liberation but to indicate that the question of the non-person influenced the theological debate as concerns the main consequences for the concepts of God and man. Attention is drawn to God as the Biblical agent who is restlessly and passionately interested in man's salvation to the extent that Jesus, in whom theologians see God acting, was not prepared to accept any compromise but, instead, offered his life for the multitude. This Biblical God, therefore, is not the one depicted in the Christian doctrine that says God is unable to change or to suffer (Segundo 1973: 211). To see God in Jesus means to accept that the face of the Christian God is that of the man of pain, of the suffering servant put to death (cf. Isa. 53) and thus sharing the suffering condition of all mankind.

This last reference to Biblical descriptions of suffering indicates the extent to which incarnation is important in this theology because it shows that human conditions have also affected God's own life on earth and gives the impulse for the liberating intervention that is meant when salvation or liberation are spoken of. Human rights and claims for freedom thus become theological challenges to a world where injustice and slavery are still living realities for many people. In this context, God is not primarily the Almighty able to fulfill all his wishes but he is the one who shares the life of the poor and is engaged on the side of the poor and the oppressed in the struggle for rights and freedom. It is this fundamental solidarity with the poor which enables

Cándido Padío from Brazil to see God himself touched if human beings are mistreated. "To hurt the human person," he says, "means to hurt God. To destroy the values of a human being is to destroy the presence of God" (Padío 1973: 280).

The concretization of such a theological program leads to the details of how political order as established in most of the Latin American countries should be changed with the goal of bringing justice and freedom to all members of society. It is obvious that this cannot be realized in many cases without clashes with the establishment, thus the use of violence comes under debate in those cases where proposals to make changes in the system were categorically refused. Defenders and opponents of the theology of liberation opened, thereby, their battle-fields to the so-called Marxist methods of analysis as well as to special issues such as a general critique of the Capitalist system. The intention, however, is to show that the new understanding of God and man has changed theology in Latin America to such an extent that not only theologians of liberation express their religious thinking in these terms but that official Church documents, too, have taken up this way of thinking.

A good example of an official Church document inspired by the main ideas referred to above is the final declaration of the Third Bishops conference held in Puebla in 1979 and published with the approval of Pope John Paul II. Its general theme is the "Evangelization at present and in the future of Latin America." It is noteworthy that here again the social situation, i. e., poverty, is the main issue which is reflected upon in light of the last judgement report from the Bible, namely, by an identification of the suffering and the poor with Christ himself:

> The situation of extremely generalized poverty takes on in real life very concrete shapes in which we should recognize the suffering face of Christ the Lord who is questioning us and appealing to us:
> — in the faces of the children marked by poverty even before they were born so that obstacles exist for the possibilities of

their self-realization because of irreparable mental and corporeal deficiencies, vagabond children and those exploited in our cities as a product of poverty and the moral degeneration of the family;

- in the faces of young people without any guidance because they do not find any place in society, who are frustrated in rural and marginal urban areas, in particular, because of the lack of professional and occupational training;
- in the faces of indigenous people, very often Afro-Americans, who, living in marginalized and inhuman situations, can be seen as the poorest among the poor;
- in the faces of the *campesinos* who, as a social group, live nearly everywhere as outcasts, sometimes deprived of their land, in situations of internal and external dependence, and submitted to systems of commercialization which exploit them;
- in the faces of often poorly paid workers, who find it difficult to form organizations and to defend their rights;
- in the faces of those who are underemployed, unemployed, or dismissed because of difficult economic conditions or because of types of development which submit the workers and their families to cold economic exploitation;
- in the faces of the marginalized and those aggregated in cities, who are under the double pressure of being deprived of material goods while being confronted with the demonstration of richness of other social sectors;
- in the faces of the elderly, who are from day to day more numerous, often marginalized by a society of progress which has no use for those who do not produce.

We share with our people all these anxieties which come from the lack of respect of man's dignity as that of a human being, the image and resemblance of the Creator and his inalienable rights as sons of God (No. 31–40).

The temptation is great to quote more passages from this very important document but let me just emphasize the bishops' call for a better world

(No. 130—136), their sympathy with the wishes and hopes of the people (No. 145) and their support for the defense of human rights (No. 146).

The main points of religious change which I described in 1976 in this example of the Latin American theology of liberation (Antes 1976) has continued and been intensified over the years to such an extent that even official Church documents, like that of the Third Bishops Conference in Puebla, have incorporated the same type of theological thinking. It takes social reality as the starting point for all reflection and tries to reinterpret the biblical message in order to become the good news for the poor (cf. Matt. 11, 5).

Religious change in Latin America is obviously due to social circumstances which, unlike the situation in Europe, requires a completely new interpretation of life as the encounter of the poor with a God who has a passionate interest in man's salvation. This observation might lead to the more general conclusion that socio-political circumstances produce changes in religion so that one might conclude that a change in social or political circumstances will have an influence on religion. A change in religion can, consequently, be seen as an indication of social or political changes in society and vice versa. This is, at least, what Gutiérrez himself has in mind when he says that Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274) followed the general fashion of his time in bringing the Aristotelian notion of the "prime mover" and the Biblical notion of God as Love systematically together (Gutiérrez 1975: 29).

We must now question whether this conclusion of the mutual influence between socio-political circumstances and religion is indeed a general rule or whether it must be modified with regard to empirical data.

3. The Protestant monastery of Loccum in Germany

We have seen that the influence of social and political circumstances on religion is the case of the theology of liberation, and a more general conclusion has been drawn by pointing out that if changes occur in

one of the fields the other side will be affected as well. The case of Loccum illustrates, however, that changes in society and religion may occur while certain religious practices retain their continuity.

Loccum is the name of an ancient Cistercian monastery and a small community situated about 35 km to the West of Hanover in Lower Saxony. The monastery, founded in 1163 and very influential during the Middle Ages, is nowadays as Protestant as the whole parish of the small village. Both belong today to the Lutheran *Landeskirche* of Hanover. The noteworthy peculiarity of the monastery is that the Protestant bishop of the *Landeskirche* traditionally serves as abbot of the monastery in which no Cistercian monks any longer live. Rather, future ministers of the Protestant *Landeskirche*, under the guidance of the abbot and a prior, are given final instruction before serving as ministers in the Protestant *Landeskirche*.

The Abbot of Loccum is elected by a "convent" of eight men, of whom seven are theologians and one is a layman and a jurist by profession. All are Protestants. In the same way as among the Cistercians, the election of the abbot remains valid for his lifetime. At present, Professor Eduard Lohse is the Abbot of Loccum though he has retired from his office as Bishop of Hanover. The convent, consequently, will wait until Lohse's death electing the current Bishop of Hanover, Hirschler, to be Lohse's successor at Loccum. The same was true in 1977 when Lohse's own election followed the death of his predecessor, Lilje, who was internationally known as one of the presidents of the World Council of Churches in Geneva.

As customary in Cistercian monasteries, the Abbot of Loccum wears a miter on his head and carries a crozier in his hand on official occasions. At first Lohse wanted to have the miter carried on a *tabula* and the crozier held by an official servant in processions, but he has become accustomed to these signs of official dignity and now accepts the miter on his head and the crozier in his hand. A photograph taken at the 800 year celebration of the monastery in 1963 shows the former Abbot Lilje with the miter and the crozier as well as with a stole and a large white

collar covering the upper part of his body from the neck down to the hips. And like a Cistercian abbot in the Catholic Church, Lilje also wore on this occasion a cross hanging on a necklace in the middle of his breast (Hirschler-Berneburg 1982: 34). The whole scene could easily be taken as a celebration in the Catholic tradition; it can hardly be imagined as the public appearance of both an abbot and a Protestant bishop.

The future ministers, as well as the abbot, retain the Cistercian tradition with regard to the "Hora", the monk's breviary. Of course, Loccum has not preserved all the horas nor does it retain Latin as the official language. But it has always insisted on the compulsory character of the hora at six o'clock in the afternoon (Hirschler-Berneburg 1982: 113, 147—155), and the visitor is regularly told that lighting candles at times of examination is still being practiced by the future ministers as an unwritten rule at Loccum. It seems that in Loccum, there was nothing strange about the idea of a Protestant monastery, at least during the time of Abbot Molanus (1677—1722) (Hirschler-Berneburg 1982: 164).

Loccum also played a special role with respect to juridical issues. It was independent until 1852 and had its own legal jurisdiction, including death penalties. Torture in witchcraft accusations was not unusual there and the list of its victims is long (Hirschler-Berneburg 1982: 175—184).

Unlike the conventional description of the Reformation as a complete break with the Roman Catholic tradition, the monastery of Loccum changed slowly into a Protestant institution and never officially broke its ties with the Cistercian order. The first indication of Protestantism was seen in a receptacle for baptismal water that, in 1598, was placed in the church of the monastery under Abbot Stracke (1600—1629) (Hirschler-Berneburg 1982: 224). Attempts were then made to re-Catholicize the monastery for about five years. Under Abbot Molanus, however, the monastic forms took a new, Protestant shape. And it was Molanus who received as a gift the crozier still in use today. Under Abbot Salfeld (1792—1829), the monastery succeeded in resisting the secularization that came to characterize the other monasteries in Ger-

many as a consequence of the disorder occasioned by Napoleon. A new constitution of the monastery was proclaimed by Abbot Uhlhorn (1878–1901) who responded, thereby, to certain claims of the Prussian Government which ruled over the area since its victory over the kingdom of Hanover in 1866. Uhlhorn emphasized the importance of Loccum with regard to the training of future ministers, and, in 1922, the monastery finally became integrated into the Protestant Lutheran *Landeskirche* of Hanover, thanks to the efforts of Paul Fleisch (Fleisch 1952: 95–96).

In spite of its obvious Protestant orientation for many centuries, the monastery has never officially declared a break with authorities in Rome nor has it ever been excluded from the order by them. This fact provided the opportunity to renew, in modern ecumenical times, the traditional ties with the main see of the Cistercian order in Rome. The elections of abbots, for example, are announced in Rome and friendly contacts have been established between these two different institutions. Consequently, through the creation of an academy, Loccum has become one of the main meeting places for interreligious dialogue, first of all with regard to the ecumenical movement in search of unity among Christian churches and denominations, and, nowadays, also in the attempt to bring all religions together into a fruitful dialogue.

4. Religious change and persistence

We first examined a typical case of religious change by establishing a relationship between the socio-political realities of a given context and the interpretation of the Biblical message within this framework which, in our case, was Latin America. And it was clearly seen here that the context had an overwhelming effect on the hermeneutics for reading the Bible. This influence was so strong that not only some theologians of liberation but official church documents as well are marked by the problems of the poor and express these in Biblical terms with reference

to the last judgement as reported in the New Testament. Salvation is thus reinterpreted as liberation in a full sense, neither excluding transcendental reality nor reducing the Christian message to an exclusively spiritual dimension. The concluding suggestion of this example, therefore, is that there is a mutual influence of the context and religious interpretation on one another so that changes in one field have immediate consequences for the other field as well.

The example of Loccum illustrates, however, that this simple conclusion cannot be drawn from the former example as a general rule that can be applied to every eventual case. It shows that although the social context and religious conviction may change, traditional forms may still survive. For the study of religion in systematic terms such an example can lead to two consequences:

a. it may draw attention to the fact that changes may occur much more slowly than usually expected from the observer's perspective. With respect to Loccum, it would suggest that becoming a Protestant did not mean, in the first period of the Reformation, the immediate adoption of anti-monastic attitudes; a preservation of tradition was not only allowed but even consciously maintained.

b. it may, on the contrary, also be interpreted as the survival of certain cherished and beloved habits that are irrelevant to the claims that form the basis for change in religion and that occur when the needs of communities and/or individuals cannot otherwise be fulfilled — as in Latin America. If these needs are fulfilled, however, then there is no urgency for change — as in the case of Loccum.

Although there is no final evidence, it seems that the second alternative can be suggested as a general rule which, however, must be tested in more cases than the two referred to above, a task that must be realized in forthcoming studies.

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Abrahim H. Khan

Opposition within affinity between religion and politics with reference to Golden Age Denmark and Brazil

One of the best known and most influential ideas in the social sciences is Max Weber's thesis on Protestantism as a factor in the emergence of modern capitalism. The idea implies an affinity between religion and politics. But within that affinity, I contend, is an opposition that is indicative of a necessary demarcation of a boundary between religion and politics, and that is suggestive of incompatibility between the two spheres. Clarifying that opposition would enhance understanding of the religion of the solitary individual, an ideal type that neither becomes institutionalized as do sectarian movements headed by charismatic leaders often become nor issues in the formation of a movement or a following. This type, bearing some resemblance to the prophetic type, is prefigured in the modern period by certain individuals, especially the religious thinker Søren Kierkegaard. To explain the opposition, the primary task of the paper, I consider two critiques of modifications in the affinity between religion and politics in two different locations and periods in history: Golden Age Denmark (1800—1850) and Protestant Brazil. These situations, that are instances of modifications, indicate that when incompatibility between the two spheres no longer obtains, religion tends to become repressive, i. e., a function of the ideology of established order.

Religion is understood in this study especially in light of Weber's thesis which refers mainly to the ascetic Protestant strain of faith which Puritan Calvinism and to some degree Lutheranism, with their emphases on this worldliness, reflect. The doctrine of predestination, the sheer

willfulness of an inscrutable deity, seems to drive men, in Weber's view, to seek success as a sign of salvation. In short, this definition of religion implies a human quest for salvific certainty and an ordered human life as warranting that certainty. More specifically, it falls within the prophetic tradition which has, as one of its cardinal features, fearless criticism of the existing order for its shortcomings in light of operative values that constitute a standard by which shortcomings in the politico-cultural sphere might be detected. This tradition of prophetic religion with ramification for politics is still alive, especially in the context of Latin American liberation theology movements.

By politics, I intend broadly the activities of persons in collective decision making, or the carrying out of collective activities in the context of institutions. A complex of such institutions by which individuals attempt to accomplish mutually desired goals constitute government (Buchanan 1968: 78). Politics so defined takes the individual as the basic component unit, and accords with the idea that government is not only *for* the people but also *by* the people. That is, individuals must count in determining what is for them. The definition further suggests a preoccupation with attitudes regarding the here and now, with giving meaning to personal concrete living in one's own social milieu.

Along the lines of modern western ideology, the social milieu is marked by commitment to progress and economic growth. A society so committed has a functional need for the discipline and organization of individuals. In this respect, politics implies the exercise of power by individuals to organize themselves in a community that would allow them to actualize certain preferred values: ones that will enhance life, and allow for a higher development of individuals living in communities. But the activities to which politics refers include also the organizing of human communities to facilitate the supply of worldly or economic demands.

The idea of human communities as organized social entities that exercise authority and influence is a presupposition of Weber's thesis that links the two concepts of capitalism and Protestantism. The fact

that he spoke about the spirit of capitalism and not just capitalism means that he was thinking about an ideal type, about a pattern of organization characterized not only by economic operations, but also by political structure, legal system, and scientific and technological institutions as well. Or, as Herbert Lüthy points out, the word "capitalism" for Weber means no less than the inner structure governing modern western society – a whole civilization type permeated by rationality (1968: 89). This is often forgotten largely because, in the debate that Weber's thesis began, the use of the term "capitalism" was limited to economic management, accumulation of capital, or profit motive. Thus, by restricting the meaning of the term, the debate shifted attention to one aspect of the relationship between the teachings of the Reformation and the modern western world, and away from the "many interconnecting links supporting a civilization's entire history" (Lüthy 1968: 91). In fact, for Lüthy and some others, the major impact of Protestantism on European history is in the political sphere or with reference to historical materialism (Eisenstadt 1968: 7).

An explanation of the affinity between Protestantism and capitalism will inevitably take into account the transformative potential of the former. The Reformation was not originally a modernizing movement but a religious one aimed at restructuring the world according to religious precepts. For Troeltsch, the restructuring was the initial impetus of Calvinism and was to be totalistic. Though Protestantism as a movement failed to carry out its initial totalistic impulse, it did contain a dynamic transformative tendency of its own. By transformative tendency is meant, says Eisenstadt, the capacity to legitimize either religiously or ideologically "the development of new motivations, activities, and institutions which were not encompassed by the original impulses and views" (Eisenstadt 1968: 10). The transformative tendency seems to arise from a combination of outlooks stressing both the ideas of worldliness and of transcendence. The emphasis on individual activity and responsibility for one's action in this world is combined with emphasis on the individual becoming directly related to the sacred and the sacred tradition (Eisenstadt 1968: 10–11).

The first institutional aspect that Protestantism tended to transform was the symbols and identities of institutions in the political sphere. These constituted the natural focus of interest and activities, given that Protestantism had already within it reformatory impulses. The teachings of Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin contained reformulations of the relationship between church and society, rulers and the ruled, and the nature and scope of political associations. Of course, the various crises of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century European society, especially regarding state versus society, reinforced the original totalistic disposition of Protestantism towards the political sphere. The crises, as with the Reformation movement, had the same broad roots: Catholic civilization in general and the Catholic Church in particular as preordained mediators between society and the sacred. Protestant rulers, needing new sources of legitimation and seeking to forge new symbols of national identity, turned to their religion which was quick to facilitate the development, to the point where it might be said that state and Church were in complicity.

Golden Age Denmark, an example of the modification in the affinity between religion and politics, manifests a failure of Protestantism to realize its initial totalistic socio-religious aims. Lutheran Christianity was the official state religion of the Danish people since the Reformation. During the absolutist period (1660—1849), official Danish citizenship, university entrance, access to professions, and the availability of employment opportunities depended on whether one espoused State Lutheranism. The Church was the property of the powerful bureaucrats: the royal regime and a small educated elite in Copenhagen. In the countryside, local pastors became the symbol of royal authority and of Copenhagen's high culture. After the revolutionary tide of 1848, nothing had changed in the relation between Church and state. According to Kirmmse's recent study, the Church was simply absorbed into the state apparatus without having a constitution or legal corporate existence of its own (Kirmmse 1990: 73—74).[1] The June 1849 Constitution contained a clause stating that the Evangelical Danish Church is the Danish People's Church and as such is supported by the state. Kirmmse

points out that this clause is deliberately vague, since it is unclear whether its substance is intended to be taken normatively or descriptively; in fact, the "Church remained more tightly bound to the state administration," under the "liberal-democratic regime" than it had been under absolutism (Kirmmse 1990: 75—76). The difference, however, is that after 1849, both Church and state, became "the inalienable moral and political property of the common man" (Kirmmse 1990: 75—76). It was the "common man" that Kierkegaard called on, especially in the final phase of the attack upon organized religion, to free religion from the ruling political regime, to recognize that the connection between the two was that of an affinity only.

The affinity between religion and politics might be explained also by the fact that, sociologically considered, institutionalized religion operates through the interpretation and application of symbols by which it remains close to the texture of social life. Religious symbols, to be operative, have to be internalized by adherents and then interpreted "with all the particularities of time and space that exist in the lives of the faithful" (Bellah 1978: 157—158). Symbols, to be effective, should touch people close to their deepest feelings, says Bellah (1978: 157—158). But depth feelings are bound up with feelings for family, locality, ethnicity, and race. In fact, religion's strength is its involvement with social reality through action, as suggested by the biblical prophets and, in contemporary society, by the writings of individuals such as Kierkegaard and Reinhold Niebuhr, or by the voices of Martin Luther King, Jr., and of Ruben Alves, among others.

As with religion, politics too involves social reality and action, for political power when wielded effectively affects millions of people. Unlike religion, however, politics has limitations and must depend on religion to legitimize it. In the Reformation period, Protestantism provided the political sphere a new basis for the legitimization of authority, namely, direct reference to the Bible. Rulers who adopted Protestantism forged new symbols of national identity, reformulated many concepts of natural law, and restructured legal institutions along the lines of the biblical covenant and contracts (Eisenstadt 1968: 12).

In fact, because of its original impulse to restructure the world in accordance with religious precepts, Protestantism facilitated and reinforced in various European states a continuous orientation towards the political sphere. Lüthy, however, seems to think that the influence of Protestantism on politics was not due to anything inherent in Protestant religion in general or in Calvinism and Puritanism in particular, but to the exigencies of the victory of Protestantism in certain European states (Eisenstadt 1968: 6).

Be that as it may, the fundamental categories of thought in the political sphere seem to be strikingly religious in origin. Persisting in the human mind is the idea that certain values are preferable. In both the religious and political spheres we find that justice as fairness is not in the interest of the stronger, that peace is preferable to war, that freedom means control over one's mind and body, that economic well-being is desired for all, that excellence in all things is meritorious (Riemer 1987: 8).[2] A religious covenant endeavoring to provide sensible rules for human conduct, to guard against the abuse of power, and to establish limits upon human action has been assimilated into a secular structure for the preservation of human life and sane human activity. This secular structure is constitutionalism with its positive policies to optimize preferred values. Though the prophets of Israel were not modern liberal democrats or socialists, they first articulated the preferred values or ethical ideals that were to become central to a democratic-socialist constitutional tradition (Riemer 1987: 8).

Constitutional politics, in so far as it takes natural science and the relation of man to nature as its model, is a constituent of modern ideology. What Louis Dumont says about modern ideology is applicable also to politics (Dumont 1977: 5, 7, 10). Both take the individual and not society as the bearer of basic ultimate value. To judge from the behavior of political parties with a long tradition, politics is itself religious. It unconsciously mimics religion in so far as it demands faith in its basic political assumptions and employs symbols that express commitment. It has implicitly a developed soteriology whose salvific agent is some form of an economic development theory that will save

the nation. In its striving to achieve material success or salvation, it cultivates a constellation of attitudes and motivations that would bring about the wealth, power, and comfort indicative of its ideal of human fulfillment.

While the fact that politics is itself a means of responding to the human condition underscores its affinity with religion, that fact can at the same time hinder recognition of the opposition and, conceivably, incompatibility between the two. The marked difference between the two, in the first place, might be expressed in this way: politics, unlike genuine religion, lacks a dialectic of return. Bellah explains this dialectic as having experienced within one's faith something radically other and then returning to one's faith in a new way (1978: 167). This is a second naiveté achieved in and through criticism. Politics has nothing within that becomes absolute in itself, it is no longer liberating but oppressive and destructive. In the second place, religion too, when it becomes institutionalized and an extension of modern ideology, ceases to have a dialectic of return. It is no longer genuine religion but an instrument and expression of the political-cultural ideology, a tool of repression, a case of affinity turned into complicity.

In Kierkegaard's view the boundaries between the spheres of religion and politics in Denmark had become obfuscated, disastrously confused to the point that any reformation by Christendom was simply a replacing of the bad with the worse. The situation did not improve even after the revolutionary events of 1848 and the introduction of a democratic constitution in 1849. To dispel for his countrymen the confusion between the two spheres, Kierkegaard took upon himself the task of delimiting them and in so doing shows, I believe, that the two are oppositional, to the point of being incompatible.

Their incompatibility does not imply for Kierkegaard that their co-existence is problematic. In fact, he saw them as mutually delimiting categories connected by a common boundary which we have sketched earlier as warranting their affinity: the individual as bearer of basic or ultimate values, a set of preferred values based on the exercise of choice or choosing absolutely that which is infinite within oneself. Kierke-

gaard's thinking about what it means to be a genuine self or person is informed by a ground rule that guides his delimiting of the two spheres and anticipates their opposition. The rule might be stated as follows: For an individual to become genuinely human, he must simultaneously relate himself absolutely to the eternal and relatively to the finite, otherwise he is misrelated and in despair (Kierkegaard 1968a: 352—353, 248, 231, 219; 1980: 13—14).[3] Implicit in the rule is the idea that a healthy human individual is a synthesis of two qualitatively different factors: the eternal and the temporal, and that the relationship to the eternal must always take priority for the synthesis to be absolute.

For both religion and politics, the individual is the basic unit. But each sees him differently. Genuine religion views the individual in relation to God, or speaks of an egalitarianism with the respect to the eternal. The integrity of the individual is based on a personal and infinite relation with God, on relating oneself infinitely to the absolute and finitely to the finite. Becoming inwardly passional to sustain that relation, the individual affirms what is genuinely universal and human about humanity.

But the relation that characterizes religion brings the individual into radical opposition with the political sphere or established order as Kierkegaard frequently refers to it in his writings. The political sphere has as its primary concern the individual in relation to material or finite ends (historically determined). Personal relation, at best, can be only a finite one, since to become related infinitely to finite ends is to despair. Egalitarianism in this sphere is concerned with abolishing finite or relative differences among members of the group. The claim on the individual is for solidarity with fellow individuals to attend to practical arrangements and material or finite ends of members of the association or group. But political-cultural formations seem also to have a built-in tendency to become deified and take hold of the entire individual personality. Kierkegaard felt that this had occurred in his day, that the political-cultural formations marking Golden Age Denmark had created a spiritual wasteland in which free space for the spirit is filled up with

civic responsibilities or finite commitments (Kirmmse 1990: 400). Individuality had become subordinated to political consensus.

The position Kierkegaard took on the question occasionally causes a liberal society serious problem and underscores the priority that the eternal has over the temporal or finite with respect to individuality. To the question of whether the individual is higher than the established order, Kierkegaard answers in the affirmative and in accordance with the ground rule enunciated earlier. That is, the established order can be completely in the right with respect to practical matters or means regarding the attainment of materials ends of its members. But with respect to moral and spiritual matters the individual is not subordinate to it. By this he meant that religion, at least in its genuinely Christian form, does not cling partisanly to any political position or established order since the latter is continually in rebellion against the eternal by claiming that it has a hand in the development of the world and in the making of the individual. When a gadfly appears to remind that the individual is higher than the established order, there is an inevitable collision (Kierkegaard 1944).[4] God uses such a person, Kierkegaard claims, to irritate the established order out of its self-complacency and satisfaction. The task of that person is to witness to a higher reality by keeping the political order open and subject to doubt. In his attack upon Christendom, Kierkegaard writes:

> What every religion in which there is any truth aims at, and what Christianity aims at decisively, is a total transformation in a man, to wrest from him through renunciation and self-denial all that, and precisely that, to which he immediately clings, in which he immediately has his life... To become a Christian in the New Testament sense is to loosen... the individual out of the cohesion to which he clings with the passion of immediacy, and which clings to him with the same passion (Kierkegaard 1968b: 222–223).

In short, genuine religion as Kierkegaard understood it requires that the individual break with immediacy. It is disruptive of personal alli-

ances with political-social formations. In reality, however, that break which Kierkegaard's genuine religion demands is difficult for most people to make. Ironically, the difficulty leads to the formation of socio-political classes that provide them with the privileges and comforts of this world but that pervert religion and compromise the requirement for the integrity of genuine individuality as Kierkegaard presented it.

A situation similar to Kierkegaard's Denmark occurred among Protestants in Brazil in this century. Conversion to Protestantism meant breaking with cultural roots that, throughout Latin America, show the deep influence of Roman Catholicism. Religious transformation meant shifting from a Hispanic cultural tradition to an Anglo-American one. The prominent missionary leader and ecumenist John R. Mott remarked on his first visit to the continent that it provided opportunities for evangelization and that missionary policy for the Protestant Church should have the Monroe Doctrine as its model (Alves 1985: 169). As the case study by Ruben Alves indicates, Brazilian Protestants point to the United States as a model of what Protestantism can do economically, politically, and culturally for a nation (Alves 1985: 167–169). However, what they see in the model is not democracy and progress, but social utopia accompanying conversion to Protestantism. The basic presuppositions governing the way that the model is perceived is deduced, Alves explains, from their understanding of the doctrine of divine providence.

Most representative of this mentality is a certain type or spirit of Protestantism that Alves dubs "Right-doctrine Protestantism" in his investigation of the Presbyterian Church in Brazil. This Church – a blend of Calvinist Fundamentalism and Pietism – and its leaders reacted violently against all socio-political movements for change at a time when Protestants in Brazil were becoming involved in such changes (Alves 1985: xiv–xv). They denounced the struggle for liberation as a betrayal of the gospel and, with some other Protestants, gave their support to the repressive political regime. As with Kierkegaard's Denmark, Church and regime became one. Protestant faith became Protestant ideology.

The study by Alves explains why this occurred. It points out that a social ethic is not an essential part of the Protestant universe, that it has no place for concerns about social justice, the exploitation of the poor, or structural changes on account of the role that the doctrine of divine providence plays in the explanation of reality (Alves 1985: 96–97, 103, 204). Contradictions cannot be named, nor are secondary causes real since the universe is a single, total, and closed rational system. Experience possesses no cognitive function for believers, since the doctrine sacralizes existing structures as the product of divine causality. Even unjust structures, established by secular power, have a place in the salvific plan. Consequently, no opposition to institutionalized totalitarian ideology is called for, no break that genuine religion demands of persons is made with immediacy (Alves 1985: 154–157, 161).

The break with immediacy, rooted in Kierkegaard's position of an infinite qualitative difference between time and eternity, is one of the ideas central to Paul Tillich's understanding of the Protestant principle as a prophetic denunciation of a sacralized secular order. That principle implies an attitude of permanent vigilance against ideology that can be either secular or sacred, a refusal to adopt a *status quo* that represses freedom of the spirit, an iconoclastic rebellion against any established order. The assumption here is that the human situation is basically distorted. Vis-a-vis this distortion, of which original sin is a symbol, the Protestant principle is in effect a call for a desacralizing of the world and a sacralizing of the integrity of the individual. As in the Lutheran Church of Kierkegaard's Denmark, so in the Presbyterian Church of Brazil, the Protestant principle seemed compromised, the spirit of the Reformation betrayed, the integrity of individuality violated, and religion as freedom from socio-political restraints discarded.

The opposition between a genuinely prophetic religion and politics suggested by the two critiques is no way tempered by Max Weber's thesis of a link between the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism. If anything at all, Weber's analysis underscores opposition more than affinity. The Weberian thesis is sometimes mistaken as establishing a

causal connection between the two spheres. But in fact the thesis implies only a functional relation between the two. That is, Weber's ideal type of Protestantism is structurally similar to his ideal type of capitalism, is adapted to and better suited to the expansion of the latter. The modern world, a society committed to progress and economic growth, has a functional need for discipline and organization. Protestantism introjected the functional demands of the socio-politico-economic system as if they were theological virtues and thereby transformed individuals into a function. To the extent that an ascetic-fundamentalist strain of historical Protestantism facilitates discipline and organization, modernity is a fruit of repressive Protestantism and not of religion understood as a response to existential questions of human being.

In the closing paragraphs of his classic work, Weber denounces both capitalism and Protestantism as being repressive, indicating that they might lead to a cultural development which has "specialists without spirit, and sensualists without hearts" (Weber, 1958: 182). Implicit in that denunciation is the recognition of a basic opposition existing between politics or rational conduct on the basis of vocation, on one hand, and religion understood as proclaiming the priority of grace over law, on the other hand. The reason for that opposition is that the former is repressive, transforming the individual into a function, while the latter works for the freedom of the individual, sacralizing the integrity of personhood. This note on individuality is heard again when he spoke of an opposition existing between charisma and freedom, on the one hand, and a society that organizes on a rational basis economic growth and political demands, on the other, noting that the individual is functional, "shorn of his natural rhythm as determined by the structure of his organism,... attuned to a new rhythm through a methodological specialization..." (Gerth-Mills 1958: 262–263).

In conclusion, critiques of the two modifications do not rule out that religion and politics have much to do with one another. The co-existence of the two spheres is a part of a system of checks and balances against the misuse of power. But co-existence of the two demands continual vigilance to ensure that they remain mutually delimiting

categories, or that complicity between them is avoided. Insinuated by their mutual delimitation are two points. One is that there is nothing particularly sacred about any of the forms of political institutions or pattern of nation-states which the modern West takes for granted. The other is that while persons are the subject for religious transformation, political institutions are objects for reform under the law. Politicians and statesmen might be "Christianized" but not politics and the state, since the latter two are ordained to remain secular according to a Protestant understanding of religion.

Further, co-existence of the two spheres is to be understood as implying that they are always in opposition. To understand their relation as such, as having conflict integral to it, is part of the totality of ideas, values, and attitudes characterizing modern western ideology, and is an attempt to break free from the fascination which representations of ideology exert on us. Or, in the words of Louis Dumont, "to isolate our ideology is a *sine qua non* for transcending it, simply because otherwise we remain caught within it as the very medium of our thought" (Dumont 1977: 27).

Finally, the claim that an oppositional relation between the two spheres characterizes an ideal type (the religion of the solitary individual) has to be tested to see whether it holds for traditions other than Protestantism. Though this ideal type has a prophetic element, it is clearly not institutionalized. It may very well be that individuals such as Gutiérrez in the Catholic tradition, and Ramakrishna and Gandhi in the Hindu tradition also prefigure the ideal type. Further testing would disclose whether opposition within affinity between religion and politics is a characteristic of an ideal type belonging primarily to Protestantism or to the phenomenon of religion in general.

Notes

1. Part one of Kirmmse's book is a valuable study of the political, economic, and social history of Denmark from 1750–1850. The second part treats the relevance of Kierkegaard's writings for delimiting the boundaries between politics and religion.
2. Riemer presents a model of prophetic politics based on four commitments. One of them is to eight prophetic values; another is to social scientific analysis and fearless criticism of the existing order. A third is to constitutional breakthroughs, and the fourth is to continuous prophetic scrutiny (1987: 3–12).
3. Kirmmse states the rule in the negative, that is, one must not relate oneself infinitely to anything finite (1990: 323).
4. Kirmmse underscores an important point about Kierkegaard in relation to politics; it is not one of content but of the priority of the personal and spiritual sphere of love. There is no "Christian" politics, only ordinary ethical-political rules (1990: 326–328).

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Latin America

Elio Masferrer Kan

Religious transformations and social change in Latin America

Important processes of transformation in the Mexican and Latin American religious field in the second half of this century have inspired a number of different hypotheses and theories (Marzal 1985; Dussel 1983; Meyer 1989; Bastian 1983). This paper will show some general tendencies from an ethnological perspective based specifically on believers rather than on the dynamics of institutions. Since the dynamic of religious processes occur over long periods, we will give a short historical overview of Latin American popular religions, the state of the question during the nineteenth century and the rise of new movements of religious dissidents in Latin America. We will also suggest a typology of these religious groups.

1. Some historical considerations

During the Colonial period, the presence of the Catholic Church in Latin America had a monopolistic character and any dissidence was quickly and firmly controlled by the Inquisition and other repressive methods in the context of the weakness of the symbolic efficacy of pre-Hispanic religions (Duviols 1971; Wachtel 1976). Some religious practices were, therefore, imposed throughout Latin America which, by a very complex process, finally became accepted by the large majority of towns in the region. The development and the adoption of this "culture

of conquest" have been analyzed by different authors (Foster 1985; Wachtel 1976).

During the nineteenth century, the new republics had to face the problems that proceeded from their legitimation and recognition by Europe and the United States in order to determine their strategies for development. Their separation from the Spanish Empire and the articulation of a world market under the British and North American Empire represented an acceptance of control by non-Catholic or Protestant countries as the model for development.

By adopting liberalism as their ideology, the new elite came into conflict with the church and its "long duration" of religious practices (Braudel 1980). It was precisely these popular religious practices that constituted the principal obstructions to the new project of liberal structural transformations and became marked, consequently, by the liberal strategies for elimination.

As the Catholic Church in many Latin American countries had little alternative, it "permitted" the liberals to do what they wanted. In other cases, the Catholic Church occasioned deep conflicts for which they are still paying. Perhaps the Mexican case is the best example of this second tendency (Meyer 1989). The confiscation of the properties of the Catholic Church produced important economic and structural changes. We still need to study the changes in the world vision of believers as a result of the transformation of the Catholic Church from state religion to the religion of most of the society.

The diminution of ecclesiastical power was the final element in the constitution of the new Latin American countries, and was backed by the hierarchy and the priests who previously had support prior to the "old Spanish empire." The rise of these states involved also the creation of new symbol systems, which were expressed in hymns, flags, shields and the creation of national systems of identity (Masferrer 1986). The dispute between the new national symbol systems and the patronage religious systems established emblematic conflicts that are still present. Another dispute between the political and symbolic systems was over control of rites of passage. The creation of the civil register of births,

marriages and deaths and the secularization of the cemeteries represented a significant change in the development of the Latin American states.

In the nineteenth century and during the first half of the twentieth, the historical denominations of Protestant origin were introduced in many countries. The European migrations had brought the Reformation churches from their original countries and the dissidents of these same churches had actively taken part in the foundation of the United States. On the one hand, many of these immigrant churches retained an ethnic character with the clergy tied to their respective original countries (LaLive d'Epinay 1975; Meyer 1989). We can mention the case of Lutherans, Anglicans and the Reformed Churches. On the other hand, dissident Protestants of European origin who originated in the United States produced strategies for transforming the native population as their principal object. In general, we can state that neither sector of historical Protestantism had more believers. The principal interest of the ethnic European churches was not, and is not, to incorporate those foreign to their national ethnic group of origin because that would transform their own characteristic as an ethnic church. We must study, then, the problems of cultural difference. We will have to see if their religious message is pertinent or not to the cultural patterns of Latin America.

Those who had the most success and who represent the greatest concern for the Catholic Church, and also for the "ethnic" Protestants (although they tend to deny it) are the dissidents: the Pentecostalists, Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses. The message and the religious practices of these groups appear to be pertinent in cultural terms to important sectors of peasants and urban marginal sectors.

In the twentieth century there were also important economic and social changes that had important repercussions for religious practices. The weakness of the rural structure of Latin American societies, the development of the agribusiness system of exportation, the process of urbanization and the rural-urban migrations, created new conditions which influenced religious practices (Garma 1983).

2. The point of view of the believers

From an ethnological perspective, it is important to start with an analysis of the transformations that appeared in the systems of symbolic efficacy, and in the ritual ceremonies and religious practices attached to them. This analytical perspective places us in a different situation with respect to the study of religious movements and the so-called secularization process.

Most researchers agree that colonial Christianity produced a great variety of religious re-elaborations as a consequence of the contact, a fusion but also the elimination of religious practices contributed by Africans, Asians, Europeans, and pre-Hispanic Americans. These fusions and reelaborations have usually been nominated "popular Catholicism" or "popular religions." They are very well documented in research, especially in that of anthropological religious studies (Marzal 1983).

One of the characteristic elements of Latin American popular religiosity, is the emphasis on the "Saint and Virgin system" in which the Catholic saints loose their intermediary character to be transformed into "sacred agents." In the case of the Virgin, the characteristics adopted by the "Marianist cult" (a cult of less importance for Catholic orthodoxy than the Trinity), represents a process of religious reelaboration of great importance.

Such strategies of conversion were not new to the Catholic Church but were prepared for through centuries of experience in the conversion of different European towns and by its conflict with the Muslims, especially among the Spaniards. The attitude of the Roman Catholic Church in light of these popular "interrelations" has varied historically. An important step was the exclusion of Native Americans from the jurisdiction of the inquisition tribunals. The campaign against idolatry was to be corrective, a process of negotiation with ethnic religious specialists. The policy of the Church in this matter involved long

periods of patience in which intermittent changes were imposed over a century-long process (Duviols 1971; Ossio 1973).

The rural popular and native religiosity, or more exactly, the "symbolic effectiveness" of the "Saint and Virgin system", was supported by the expansion of rural capitalism, which transformed agrarian products into merchandisable goods and did not allow these goods to be treated as sacred. We must remember, for example, that good rains do not assure abundant crops. The decline of international prices of certain products could become a real problem for the production of goods. A hailstorm in Brazil has almost always been assumed to be a "blessing" among the peasants of the world because with it comes a rise in coffee prices.

With the growth of new Latin American cities, the old ceremonies and religious practices appropriate to a few thousand people were, in many cases, not able to address new urban problems, as was the case with many of the "cargo" systems. Popular religiosity found it difficult to offer practical alternatives for the larger increments of urban populations.

The difficulties with the "traditional saints" as an answer for the new structural needs did not necessarily result in secular tendencies or in the loss of the religious feelings but often in a development of symbolic reelaboration among the popular groups and a reorientation in the church. As an alternative, the Catholic Church developed, within the "Saint and Virgin system", a message that emphasizes Christ as a principal cult element and religious agent. This strategy has been effective in many cases and is part of the innovations of the Second Vatican Council. Also, the Latin American cult of "Mary", which has a strong backing among the Catholic hierarchy, became reoriented towards the "Cult of Christ".

The agreements adopted by the Second Vatican Council are various. We emphasize, however, that in the reformulation of the "Saint and Virgin system", much was criticized, replaced and, in some cases, its very existence was called into question. We also feel that it is important

to emphasize the strengthening of the presence of the Holy Ghost in religious practices.

The characteristics of rituals to the Holy Ghost have similarities that transcend differences between the churches. Glossolalia, for example, increased among both Catholic charismatics and Pentecostalists. Nevertheless, these are not the only charismatic groups. Kardec's Spiritists, the Trinitary Spiritualists Marianos (Oritz 1990), the African-American cults are constantly expanding. They are, in many cases, characterized by religious experiences which admit the participation of the same persons in different cults. The faculty of believing oneself to be reborn in the Holy Ghost is claimed by members of different churches.

Another matter, often forgotten, is the impact of the disappearance from the cities of the cargo cults with their concomitant social systems upon the cult of Saints and Virgin. Participation in the religious parades and feasts was, for many years, an important instrument of social organization. It was eliminated by the liberal reforms and replaced by the public cult and the substitution of guilt by syndical organizations and sponsors. However, these new political and syndical organizations were unable to address the needs of social solidarity that were in crisis due to the disappearance of the extended family.

Religious groups with their emphases on social organization and solidarity between members strengthened by religious practices were also transformed in face of the complexity of urban life. These transformations echo those of marginal groups or those that are in the process of acculturation. Nor can we forget to mention the factor of social class. The dynamic of class conflict has characterized Latin America in this century; the processes of industrialization and the crisis of the Hacienda system, plantations and other forms of rural work, produced inequitable systems of wealth distribution. For a long time, the Catholic and Protestant churches supported the status quo and traditional power. Social conflict was assumed by the religions and social class expressed itself in the churches. The Christian promise of paradise became increasingly questioned by those who proposed a realization of the utopian project in this world.

The increasing development of social conflict produced a reformulation of the world vision and of religious practice from high quarters in the religious establishment as well as by religious specialists. Organic expressions of this process are liberation theology as well as the organization of conservative groups which defended the existing order.

Historically, the religious reelaboration of social conflict was the basis for "messianic and millenarian movements" among the rural populations and in the ethnic groups.The common denominator of these movements was precisely their incapacity to propose politically operative options which would allow for consolidation.

On the other hand, contemporary social movements of religious origin have made proposals directly relevant to contemporary sociopolitical systems. These religious practices are legitimated by the social, political and economic practices of its members. The concern for a coincidence between religious, political and social practices, is, paradoxically, the origin of new conflicts.

This process of the consolidation of political alternatives, revolutionary action and the transformation of the social order, is not exclusive to Christian liberation theology. It has also appeared in the Afro-Brazilian cult movements of the Kimbanda, which are related to the spirits of the Negroes and Indians who fought against slavery, exploitation and oppression by whites.

3. The dynamic of religious transformations

Researchers conventionally apply genetic-historical criteria to classify religious groups, with an emphasis on institutional matters. A typology often used by researchers in Latin America divides the Catholics into popular or syncretists, conservatives, and liberation theologians and progressives. The Protestants or "evangelicals" are divided between the traditional groups and Pentecostalists. There is also a category of

para-Christians, such as the Mormons and the Jehovah's Witnesses. Finally, there are the Afro-American cults and a miscellaneous category which includes Orientalists, Esoterics, etc. If we introduce the category of religious systems and the world vision from the perspective of believers, however, it transcends such institutional limits. In that way, the pre-Hispanic religions have validation for such groupings. The ethnic reelaboration of colonial Catholicism produced ethnic religious systems such as the very interesting Catholic *totonacs* or Catholic *quechuas*.

The notion of "popular Catholicism" is useful when studying urban groups or peasant meetings. Many ethnic groups now have nativist movements which attempt to purify their religious systems from Christian contamination and to return to their origins. Another interesting process is that represented by the conservatives which exists among the Catholics as well as between the Catholics, Protestants, Jehovah's Witnesses, or Mormons.

Some researchers do not accept the existence of fundamentalists among the Catholics. Nevertheless, the reading of the Bible since the Second Vatican Council has generated movements that have fundamentalist elements and their evolution should be studied. In popular terms, the policy of the Second Vatican Council to deemphasize the "Cult of the Saints" in favor of the centrality of Christ, is perceived as an approximation of Catholic practice to that of Protestantism. This perceived accommodation increases the possibilities of ecumenical cooperation. The Catholic Church, however, knowing its own dimensions and the minority character of the others, has little interest in the existence of these different processes. We must remember also that some ecumenical discussants have, in America, an ethnic religious character. The ethnic religions in Latin America could be divided into two major groups: the ones that belong to the pre-Hispanic or colonial groups, to whom are denied all legitimacy and are considered objects of missionary work, and the ethnic religions of the immigrants, such as "Jews", "Armenians", "Greeks", "Russians", etc., around whom there is no missionary work.

The religious systems associated with spirits are the most dynamic and fertile in the field of religious reformulations. The Catholic charismatics have similar practices as the pentecostal groups, which also have "pentecostalized" sectors of the historical denominations. We could include in this category the Afro-American cults or the *Espiritualistas trinitarios marianos.*

We should not forget to mention that those who assume the validity of class conflict as a basis for society are also reflected in the religious field, and divide them. On the other hand, this analysis excludes those religious groups who emphasize self-salvation.

The religious groups interested in a social praxis of religious origin are divided into those interested in maintaining the status quo, usually nominated "conservatives" and the liberation theologies. The former include the religious orders, diocesans and Catholic laity, sectors of the historic denominations, certain pentecostal groups and important groups of Mormons. Opposed to them are groups of Catholics, Protestants, Pentecostalists, and Afro-American cults.

The field of Latin American religions has been divided into a great variety of economic, social and political relations with a religious base in the institutionalized churches. The flow of new religious groups is based, in many cases, on specialized forms of such interactions. The forms of this specialized interaction are expressed in the fields of health, education, social organization and systems of small group solidarity. Orientalist groups, based on systems of introspection, are very popular among the high and middle classes, but they have not been studied adequately.

In conclusion, we can state that the political and social changes produced by the development of complex forms of capitalism in Latin America have not brought a decline of popular religious feelings but have produced new ways of elaborating traditional messages and the formation of new religious projects.

To look for the believers' point of view, for that of the "consumers" of symbolic religious products, opens new ways of understanding the dynamic of the religious systems, the phenomena of simultaneous

participation in different churches and religious groups and the solidarities being built between members of different religious denominations who share more with the members of their ideological orientation than with the members of the religious institution to which they belong. The perspective of the believers implies religious practices that constantly call the hierarchy of the ecclesiastical systems into question, confirming them as systems of power alternative to their churches and to the institutionalized clerical systems.

The newly capitalistic complex of the social, political, economical and quotidian life of the Latin American societies has opened religious options as a diverse and contradictory fan. We still need to evaluate with specific fieldwork the relationship of the different religious groups to changes in worldview.

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Irene S. Vasquez

In the beginning there were the Canaries ...: The forgotten purgatory en route to the new world

> The rude process of European conquest began in 1402, a date we might take as the birth year of modern European imperialism. The Moors still held southern Iberia, and the Ottoman Turks were advancing in the Balkans, but Europe had begun to march – or rather to sail – to world hegemony. An estimated 80,000 Guanches stood in opposition to this initial sally, like pickets deployed out in front of trenches held by Aztecs, Zapotecs, Araucanians, Iroquois, Australian aborigines, Maori, Fijians, Hawaiians, Aleuts, and Zunis (Crosby 1987: 81).

If 1402 is the birth date of modern European imperialism, as Alfred Crosby proposes in his text, *Ecological imperialism* (1987), then it is an innocuous birth, an inauspicious birth completely uncelebrated in the annals of European history writing. On this date the first of the Canary Islands, Lanzarote, was forcibly taken by European invaders. The native Guanche resistance that would continue for almost a century, begins here and results in, as Crosby so graphically puts it, "with the possible exception of the Arawaks of the West Indies, the first people to be driven over the cliff of extinction by modern imperialism" (Crosby 1987: 80). Several questions emerge. Why does Crosby give this date and event such significance? Why has history writing about the origins of European imperialism neglected the significance of the conquest and colonization of the Canaries and the extermination of the Guanches by European, specifically, Spanish invaders?[1] What theoretical, methodo-

logical, or even historical importance does this issue have in terms of the contemporary study of religion in the New World?

The following commentary likewise serves as an initial sally into the current battlefield comprised of attacks upon the complicity of scholarship in the European colonial enterprise and counteroffensive reentrenchments often masked as calls to a "new humanism" or "hermeneutic explorations."[2] During the last twenty-five years, social scientists and humanists in the United States and Western Europe have been engaged, at times, in an uncharacteristically emotional orgy of confessions concerning the historical development of their respective disciplines: anthropology, political science, history, literature, literary criticism, art, music, etc., and their intricate and sustained complicity, conscious and unconscious, in reinforcing the claims and justifications of European colonial and post-colonial hegemony.[3]

This upsurge of conscience and critical reflexive scholarship has several sources attributed to it: a general global reaction to the vestiges of European colonial rule that became more apparent and onerous after the international reconnaissance of World War II; ethnic, women's and civil rights dissent in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s with demands for redress across the board; and an awareness, in the field of anthropology, of the "vanishing" of their traditional subject matter, "the primitives." This alleged demise of anthropology's emblematic subject matter merits a brief review.

During the 1920s and 1930s, just as ethnography was beginning to get more rigorously systematized both theoretically and methodologically in an attempt to gain the status of a "science," anthropologists noted that the consequential processes of Western colonization or, as it is put more harmlessly, "modernization," had severely limited the surviving cultures that were deemed the proper study for anthropology. The "primitives" were "vanishing" either through genocide or through acculturation to modern or "nontraditional" lifestyles. Salvage ethnography was urgently called for to document the surviving "primitives." One anthropologist, Robert Redfield, however, made a convincing proposal that not only legitimized a shift in appropriate subject matter

for ethnography, but fostered as well a salvage of the threatened discipline of anthropology itself.

Redfield made a long term comparative study of several Maya villages in Central America developing the concept of a "folk-urban continuum" (Redfield 1950, 1955; also see Wolf 1966). The upshot of his studies was that the study of the minute processes involved in the cultural evolution of "simple" (read "primitive") to "complex" (read "civilized") societies were necessary to the theoretical enterprise of anthropology. Hence, those societies previously ignored or denigrated and considered "folk" or "peasant" were not only appropriate, but instrumental for understanding how a culture transformed itself from a "simple" to a more "complex" state.

After the interruption and impetus of World War II, the 1950s became a period of ferment for the study of contemporary as well as historical peasant or folk societies throughout the world. Once the complexities and interconnections between countryside and urban centers were noted along with the endemic experiences of marginality of the "folk" in transition, even more attention was given to the entire experience of marginality and alienation in urban centers. This interest was dangerously close to the "territory" of sociology, but the anthropologist could still claim some unique or distinctive quality for their subject matter: their subjects were unlike the normative subjects of sociologists. Urban anthropology was intrigued with prostitutes, bums, street vendors, the aged, homeless, ex-cons, runaway children, bag ladies, any and all types of nonnormative "others" which could be internal to Western societies as well as to colonized ones. The only subjects that emerged as inappropriate for anthropologists to study were white, Western educated, middle class males. This epistemic center revealed the privileged, hegemonic position of the post-colonial authoritative "I."[4] This awareness converged with other intellectual trends and developments too convoluted to entertain here, but ones that reinforced the socio-political ferment in the United States during the late 1960s, that resulted in calls for a thorough revamping of disciplines from their fundamental premises to their speculative edges.[5]

In reviewing a trial case indicative of the current status of anthropology, James Clifford, in his text aptly entitled *The predicament of culture: Twentieth century ethnography, literature, and art*, notes "symptoms of a pervasive postcolonial crisis of ethnographic authority" (1988: 8). The predicament he outlines no longer confronts only those inheritors of colonial hegemony, whose options include the struggle with confession, compromise, defeat (into acceptance of their inherited power) or active support of the status quo. Now everyone is embroiled. Clifford writes:

> While the crisis has been felt most strongly by formerly hegemonic Western discourses, the questions it raises are of global significance. Who has the authority to speak for a group's identity or authenticity? What are the essential elements and boundaries of a culture? How do self and other clash and converse in the encounters of ethnography, travel, modern interethnic relations? What narratives of development, loss, and innovation can account for the present range of local oppositional movements? (1988: 8).

Clifford is delineating issues that emerge beyond the emotional release expected through confession. Sincerity of remorse and thoroughness in detail concerning the damages done to the colonized in these disciplinary confessions may be instrumental supposedly in order to "set the record straight." But confessions have a coercive undercurrent intrinsic in their dynamic. Forgiveness is the countervailing response or expectation to a confession and thus moral parity as an aftermath status between the offended and the offender is almost ensured to the confessor. As such, these confessions are a cheap way out of any crisis of conscience suffered by scholars inheriting the privileges of European colonialism. However, scholarship is not merely a personal issue of conscience. Forgiveness will not solve the problem of future methods of intellectual inquiry. And forfeiture of the entire intellectual enterprise, as some have chosen, whether through ethical reasoning or through sheer epistemological bankruptcy (for an interesting discussion of this issue see Alcoff 1991–92), is likewise not a solution to the incessant human enterprise

of knowledge seeking and the inevitable social and political uses that will be made by knowledge acquired. We need to press on to figure out how human beings work, how they think, act, live, create, and destroy and contend with the consequences such inquiry entails. The premise guiding such inquiry is the intrinsic parity of all human beings, past and present.

A ready method to test how human beings work is to propose a "fact," "a true story," that contradicts the prevailing fact or story, especially if that story is about the heroic origins of a particular people. Crosby employs such a strategy when he assigns 1402 as the birthdate of modern European imperialism. Although other events or processes have been assigned this status, such as Marco Polo's voyages to the East, the invention of moveable type resulting in the printing press, the nailing of the 95 theses of Martin Luther on the church door, the rounding of the Cape of Good Hope by Diaz, the singular most significant date heralding the beginning of a new age is 1492, the date Cristobal Colon "discovered" the New World. But Crosby refutes this near-mythic date by proposing instead that ninety years earlier the conquest of several hundred native Guanches on the smallest of the Canary Islands off the coast of Africa merits the status of being the birth-giving event that set off the global transforming processes that followed in the wake of European exploration, conquest, and colonization. Why is Crosby being so provocative? Why is he telling us this alternative story? Because we insist he prove it. We insist, through the implicit rules of scholarship that he prove that his claim to "significance" meets with ours. It is a clever gambit. Through the magician's trick of misdirection while looking at the Canaries, Crosby is giving us an even more profound insight into the significance of the Columbian encounter, not only in fact (ecology, military, strategy, evangelical issues, etc.) but also as evidenced in the emergent Edenic rhetoric of the European colonists about the New World. With convoluted and tragic irony, this emergent paradisical rhetoric from and about the New World would reshape the West's vision of human purpose and destiny.

In proposing this alternative "true story" to the normative "true story," Crosby dishevels our understanding of "significance" in terms of the beginnings of European imperialism. He provokes us to ask: What's so significant about the conquest and colonization of the Canaries? Through this rhetorical device Crosby has license to offer a constellation of considerations previously overlooked, undervalued, or completely absent that shaped the events of the Columbian encounter and its aftermath. And these considerations, he demonstrates, require scrutiny of the fifteenth-century experience of the Spaniards in the Canaries. So, in response to the question he intentionally provoked: What's so significant about the conquest and colonization of the Canaries?, he can begin his responses with: Primarily, they were in the right place at the right time — for the Spaniards. It was the "right time" in that the newly united Spain of Ferdinand and Isabel was intensely involved in multiple mercantile, diplomatic, military, and evangelical enterprises to further the consolidation of their kingdom.[6] Competition with Portugal instilled in Spain a desire to acquire its own Atlantic colonies thus fueling the repetitive and prolonged military campaigns in the Canaries that culminated in the defeat of the last two islands in 1492 and 1493. 1492 was also the date of the *reconquista*. The centuries-long crusade by the Spanish Christians to oust the Muslim "infidels" from the Spanish peninsula was finally accomplished in the conquest of Granada. The time was right for territorial expansion seeking mercantile gains fired by both military and missionary zeal.

The Canaries were in the "right place" in both a geographical and ecological sense. These islands were located en route to the African circumnavigational voyages of the Portuguese explorers. Valuable maritime, specifically navigational, knowledge could be gleaned first hand from sailors, pilots, and captains in the ports of these and other Atlantic islands of the Madeiras and the Azores colonized by the Portuguese. Such knowledge was highly prized during this critical period of Portuguese maritime exploration.[7]

The primary ecological assets were: climate, soil, and timber, ideal for establishing sugar plantations with their requisite of a warm and

mild growing season and a plentiful supply of timber sufficient to fuel the voracious sugar mills. Contingent upon establishing sugar plantations was the need for a labor supply. Again, the Canaries generously supplied this "asset." The advantage the Canaries had over the Portuguese colonies was the presence of large populations of natives that could be enslaved both for export (Crosby 1987: 98) and to work on the newly established and immensely profitable sugar plantations.[8] However, this human "asset" proved to be problematic from the onset even prior to the initial 1402 defeat of the Guanches on Lanzarote.

The Guanches were agricultural-nomadic peoples and fierce warriors. To lay siege to towns or fortresses, as was the method of Spanish medieval warfare, was not an option in the Canaries. Rather than their customary "civilized" methods of warfare, the Spaniards had to contend with guerilla tactics which often proved frustrating if not humiliating by forcing frequent retreats from warriors bearing only stone weapons. But the Spaniards quickly discovered the terror they could instill in the natives with their recently developed gunpowder-based military technology such as arquebuses and canon. Another weapon that proved unexpectedly efficacious was the horse. Horses were novel and frightening to the Guanches who saw not horsemen, but centaurian monsters. The most devastating allies, however, that the Spanish unwittingly employed were hosts of microlife. Diseases such as measles, smallpox, and the yet mysterious *peste* and *modorra* proved to be epidemically disastrous to the Guanches (Crosby 1987: 92—103).

The divide and conquer strategy of the Spaniards was often employed and proved critical in breaking down Guanche resistance. Especially successful was the Spaniard's ability to enlist Guanche allies from one region to fight Guanches in another.

Cumulatively, the continual military assaults and devastating epidemics along with the grief and disorientation they caused may have led to some of the successful evangelizing by the Spanish missionaries, which again led to compliant allies. But, in terms of evangelization, the singular event affecting Guanche conversion earlier than any other was also a foreshadowing of an epiphany that would come later in the conquest

of the New World. The Virgin, Our Lady of Candelaria, appeared to Guanche shepherds of Guimar, part of the island of Tenerife, in 1400, nearly a century and a half prior to Juan Diego's momentous encounter with the Virgin of Guadalupe in Mexico (Crosby 1987: 88–89; Lafaye 1976).

Anyone familiar with the series of events and processes occurring during the period of contact after the 1492 Columbian landfall is immediately struck with the amazing "coincidences" or "foreshadowings" between Spanish-native ecological and sociological experiences in the Canaries and in the contact era New World. In his summary of the conquest of the Canaries, Kirkpatrick Sale delineates "several lessons" valuable to Castile's military and territorial expansionist enterprises.

> In the summer of 1492, Castile had sent an armed expedition to conquer the island of Palma, in the Canaries, one of the last two islands there still not under the control of the Iberian monarchy. Like other expeditions before, this was to use the full force of European power to suppress and eliminate the Guanches, a people who had been on the islands for centuries, and to implant outposts for European agriculture and trade.
>
> The Canaries, islands known to the ancients, had been rediscovered in 1336 and settled by Europeans, in bloody battles with the natives, from the early fifteenth century on. Many European princes and trading houses established colonies there, but over the decades Castile proved the dominant power and, despite the Guanche resistance, eventually occupied and secured most of the territory. In 1479 Portugal relinquished its claims in favor of Castile; after another four years the island of Grand Canary was under firm control; and the island of Palma, after the siege beginning this summer, fell in 1493, with Tenerife to follow three years later. By 1496 the Canaries became the first overseas possession of what was to become a worldwide Spanish empire.
>
> In the twenty years of its conquest Castile learns several lessons. European armaments, supplemented by armor, horses, dogs, and

> a good deal of treachery, were superior to any resistance by peoples without guns, however brave and fierce they might be. The lure of land and riches would attract any number of Iberian soldiers and hidalgos, no matter how risky the invasion might be, so long as they were guaranteed the spoils of conquest and a few titles. Populations far from Europe seemed to be peculiarly subject to diseases and sharp population die-offs, a fortunate effect for the intruders — who, though they did not know it, introduced the deadly pathogens. And after the disruption of a conquered ecosystem, when native species were extinguished or displaced, new species from Europe, aggressive and more opportunistic, grew in their stead.
>
> The Guanches, who once numbered between 80,000 and 100,000, after less than two centuries of conquest and settlement were extinct (1990: 50—51).

The "lessons" the Spanish learned in their conquest of the Guanches of the Canaries remain curiously obscured in the telling and celebrating of the almost cosmogonic date of 1492. To begin to seek an answer for this obscurity, we return to the initial questions posed: Why does Crosby give this (alternative 1402) date and event (the conquest of the first of the Canaries, Lanzarote) such significance? Why has history writing about the origins of European imperialism neglected the significance of the conquest and colonization of the Canaries and the extermination of the Guanches by European, specifically, Spanish invaders? What theoretical, methodological, or even historical importance does this issue have in terms of the contemporary study of religion?

My initial responses to these questions are more in terms of venues for future study. Solely in terms of the massive amounts of deaths that European imperialism would incur, a notion so domesticated now as to have eventually engendered a term like "megadeaths," Crosby has good cause to signal and duly recognize the first people to undergo genocide. Given the historical context, the Spanish like other Europeans were yet recovering from significant population losses from Black

Plague epidemics, so labor was yet in critical demand. Slaves, human bodies to work the land, were of value, not dead natives. Nonetheless, extermination, not slave-raiding tactics, were often used. (This radical establishment of dominance at the cost of immediate profit needs further study). The lack of "civilized" booty and the climatic possibilities of the Canaries shifted the direction of plunder: slaves and sugar were the intermediaries between a landless or poor Iberian soldier and great wealth. The issue of slavery, although not new to the Spanish, was yet problematic because of the requirements of Christian evangelization and the subsequent rights held to be inherent to a Christian. These Guanches could not be classified as "infidels" because they had not been exposed to the Gospel and rejected it as had the Peninsular Jews and Moors. The Guanches fell into a problematic category of the "pagan" (Elliott 1966: 68). With Reformation and Counter-reformation as backdrop, the stage was now set for revisioning the category of the human as well as the category of the "Christian." But pagans were not completely new to the Spanish. They had encountered them in the classic writings of the Greeks and Romans as well as in the corpus of European folklore and in traveler's tales. But to have to make imperialistic decisions about duties and obligations toward conquered pagans was a new problem. In the Canaries, conversion, then shortly thereafter, genocide, resolved the issue in short order for the Spaniards. But a more extensive solution to this problem was only postponed until contact with the New World.

When the Spanish again encountered similar conquest problems in the New World, they could draw pragmatically on the lessons they had learned in the Canaries. But what they did not expect was that the entire "newness" of the New World would not be a simple matter of familiarization with a land "known to the ancients." The New World existed without direct historical explanation. It only had mythic precedences, which were legion. The New World became the immense territory of *Tierra Incognita*, increasingly more resonant with possibilities of paradise than the perils of unknown hells.[9] The Canaries, part of the Old World, did not have such mythically resonant possibilities.

When mentioned at all in imperialistic narratives, they become "flyaway islands," as Morison puts it, false islands that disappear as the sailor approaches (Morison 1971: 83). The Canaries seem to dissolve and move into the Caribbean or the Pacific, somewhere en route of important travelers' voyages, but never themselves a critical destination.

In terms of the study of religion in the New World, the Edenic rhetoric suffusing New World narratives, reports, dreams, prophecies, manuals, justifications for slavery and conquest, has just begun to be studied. Its impact on the human imagination is yet unmeasured. What is apparent is that the rhetoric of New World paradises not only drowns out the agonies of the preceding purgatories, it necessarily forgets them or misdirects us about their significance. Worse than ignorant, we remain misinformed about the larger contexts and complexities involved in the birth of modern European imperialism. The Spaniards may have suffered greatly to learn their "lessons" of imperialistic rule in the Canaries. But it was the Guanches who died, absolutely, in the front trenches of incipient battle for the emergent New World. By 1541, Crosby writes, "The Guanches had become a paltry few, stumbling along the edge of doom, numbly observing their own extinction" (Crosby 1987: 99).[10] In commemorating 1492, we forget 1402, rendering ourselves inculpable and incapable to even "numbly observe" the Guanches' extinction.

Notes

1. Although the Spanish were ultimately involved in the conquest and genocide of the Guanches, in 1402 a small expedition of Frenchmen under Castilian auspices conquered Lanzarote (Crosby 1987: 82).
2. See Lawson-McCauley (forthcoming), for an excellent articulation of the positions of anthropologists and religionists vis-a-vis the issue of complicity, conscience, and attempted hermeneutic resolutions.

3. There is an enormous literature documenting this issue. Some seminal texts with excellent bibliographies are:
   Asad 1973; Boon 1982; Clifford 1988; Clifford-Marcus 1986; Dwyer 1982; Fabian 1983; Hymes 1969; Marcus-Fischer 1986; Rabb-Rotberg 1982; Reiter 1975; M. Rosaldo-Lamphere 1974; R. Rosaldo 1989; Said 1978; Wagner 1980; White 1973.
4. In Marshall Sahlins' critique of Marxism and structuralism, he arrives at a similar construct which he dubbed "the West and the Rest" (1976: 54). In the Introduction to her text, *Icon and conquest*, Bernadette Bucher states the situation more succinctly in an epigram attributed to Sol Worth: "Anthropologists, too, are notorious for studying everyone but themselves" (1981: xiii).
5. See R. Rosaldo's *Culture and truth* (1989), for a survey of contingent and complementary intellectual trends and social developments affecting this movement.
6. See Elliott 1966 for an overview of the historical context of the Reconquista, Conquest of the Canaries, and encounter with the New World.
7. See Sale 1990 for the historical context and questions that surround Columbus and his gleaning of critical navigational knowledge prior to his famous New World voyages.
8. The primary role of the Canaries in establishing the first European sugar plantations and generating great wealth was noted by Francis Bacon in his essay "On Wealth." "The fortune, in being the first in an invention, or in a privilege, doth cause sometimes a wonderful overgrowth in riches, as it was with *the first sugarman in the Canaries*: therefore if a man can play the true logician, to have as well judgment as invention, he may do great matters, especially if the times be fit: he that resteth upon gains certain, shall hardly grow to great riches; and he that puts all upon adventures, doth oftentimes break and come to poverty: it is good, therefore, to guard adventures with certainties that may uphold losses" (*Bacon's essays*, 1625: 158–159).
9. For the mythic precedences and images surrounding the existence of the New World, see Hodgen 1964 and Honour 1975.
10. 1541 heralded the eve of the New Laws of the Indies which were established in 1542–1543 by the Spanish monarchy. While their real intent was to reinforce and conserve royal authority in the New World, the

> New Laws, to be sure, were expressed not in terms of the struggle for royal power but in terms of the humanitarian policy toward native peoples, a policy to which the crown repeatedly gave theoretical priority. The New Laws prohibited Indian enslavement, even as punishment. They forbade the granting of new encomiendas. They ordered ecclesiastics and royal officers to relinguish immediately any encomienda holdings they might possess ... Tributes taken from Indians were to be fixed and regulated and were not to be exorbitant (Gibson 1967: 58—59).

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Sylvia Marcos

Missionary activity in Latin America: Confession manuals and indigenous eroticism

Get ready, my little sisters:
let us go and gather flowers ...
with my garland of flowers adorn yourself,
my flowers they are, and I a woman of Chalco.
... Among joyful pleasures we will laugh.

— Song of the Women of Chalco

1. Introduction

The 500th anniversary of the "encounter" of the Old and New Worlds provides an excellent opportunity to look at what we know about pre-Columbian societies in terms of sexuality and eroticism and the place and function of the feminine. This delicate and intimate area of human experience was an important battleground in the conquest of the Americas, especially in Latin America where Iberian Catholicism confronted and ultimately dominated the region's rich civilizations with their complex cosmologies, thereby extinguishing many cultural expressions.

While it is impossible precisely to reconstruct the preconquest environment in order to ascertain the values and attitudes surrounding sexuality and eroticism, we do have recourse to many texts, objects and testimonies concerning the preconquest era, and there is also a wealth

of material from colonial times that reveals the course of this "battle for souls" — as the missionaries saw their work, or the process of cultural annihilation — as the indigenous inhabitants experienced it.

2. Forced catechization

Catholicism was frequently established in the New World through coercion and sometimes through violence and bloodshed. Although many missionaries did charitable work, their efforts could not counteract the destruction wrought by others nor the overwhelming impact of a new religion and culture on the indigenous one. The abuses that characterize the history of the Spanish Catholic Church in the New World were often sanctioned by Church authorities. When outright abuse, injustice, and excess were not the case, then the "lesser evil" endured by the conquered Indians was profound disapproval of their way of life and total repudiation of their world view.

Spain's economic exploitation of the Americas was sanctioned by the objective of Christianizing the Indians (Ramirez 1989). The colonists made use of various legal mechanisms based on pre-Hispanic and Iberian institutions to extract labor from converted Indians, often promising the Church to Christianize them. Frequently this obligation was reduced to providing a half hour of catechism per week, a condition met sporadically, when not entirely ignored (Las Casas 1552).

The Franciscans (1524), Dominicans (1536), Augustinians (1553) and later the Jesuits (1572) who converted and catechized the indigenous populations were, for the most part, dedicated and humble religious, concerned about the well-being of the Indians. Some friars who participated in the colonization, especially before 1570 during the so-called "spiritual conquest" period (Ricard 1933), vigorously opposed the abuses of the secular colonizers. However, they were also paternalistic, authoritarian (Lopez 1976) and, above all, intolerant of the beliefs of a

religious symbol system foreign to them (Bonfil 1987; Gruzinski 1986, 1987, 1988; Ramirez 1989). Some friars glimpsed the validity and richness of Mesoamerican civilization, but the Church hierarchy viewed their accounts with suspicion and disapproval. The famous defender of the Indians, Fray Bartolome de las Casas, for example, wrote his controversial *Brevissima relación de la destruyción de las Indias* [Brief account of the destruction of the Indies] in 1552. Its publication provoked discord and animosity among his co-religionists, and Las Casas was rabidly persecuted because he denounced abuse of the Indians.

The majority of the clerics who came to catechize new Spain were much less understanding than Las Casas. At times, the intolerant behavior of some clerics became so extreme that church authorities removed them from their posts, as was the case with the Franciscan bishop of Yucatan, Diego de Landa. He punished the Mayan Indians he found celebrating their ancient religious rites in a hidden temple in the jungle by hanging them by their hands and feet. He wrote a legal brief or "allegation" in 1562 defending himself in a court proceeding against the accusation of having burned Indians alive. Although he was removed from his post, he was reinstated as bishop several years later.

Just before his death in 1579, Diego apparently repented, because he tried to rescue some of what his excessive holy rage had destroyed. Thus he compiled, with the help of knowledgeable local informants, the meanings of some twenty Mayan glyphs. He also wrote *Relación de las cosas de Yucatán* [Account of things in Yucatan]. It is ironic that the principal work for the study of Mayan culture was written by the person responsible for the tremendous losses in this region: Diego de Landa had burned mounds of sculptures, codices, terracottas, jewels and other expressions of Mayan culture.

In their chronicles of life in the New World, clerics were required to emphasize the "cruel" and "demonic" character of indigenous Americans. Their writings were circulated only when they used phrases such as "these Indians have the devil as their idol," or "the natives live degrading lives," or "it is astonishing to see how bestial they are, how they lack understanding." These formulas legitimized the abuse of the

Indians that occurred under the pretext of catechizing them. Even Fray Bernardino de Sahagun (d. 1590), considered one of the most reliable sources for pre-Columbian times, conformed to this requirement. As he chronicles the achievements of indigenous culture, he portrays the Indians at times as "bloody", qualifies their ancestral customs as "idolatries," calls their divinities "devils," and exaggerates the quantitative importance of the sacrifices (Pagden 1985). By showing too much understanding, he might have been subjected to accusations by ecclesiastics of being an "idolater." Despite these contradictions, his investigation was unprecedented in scope and method. The questionnaire he used to gather information on Nahuatl culture is perhaps the first such systematic questionnaire in history. With good reason he is regarded as the father of ethnology, and his *Historia general de las cosas de la Nueva España* [General history of the things of New Spain] is considered one of the most trustworthy documents on Nahuatl culture.

The Indians of the Americas often chose to take refuge with the missionaries who, in order to catechize them, defended them from the voracious Spanish colonizers and their ambitions for quick fortune. As Bonfil, Lopez and Ramirez point out, the option offered by the missionaries was the desperate choice of the lesser evil. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that although evangelizers during the era of the spiritual conquest did not, for the most part, torture the Indians, nor subject them to forced labor, nor let them die of hunger, nor rape the women, their "colonization" took place at deeper levels. In order to "save" them, it seemed necessary to destroy their identity. This negation of the indigenous self altered the way the Indians conceptualized themselves, their world, the earth, the sun, space and time and the divinized cosmic forces. Genocide and ethnocide were arrayed against them: genocide despoiled them and even deprived them of life, and ethnocide devastated them spiritually and negated their culture's ways of perceiving the cosmos.

Concerning this, Gruzinski comments:

> (H)owever brutal the aggressions and impositions of the Indian victors might have been — the Triple Alliance, for example —

> they respected the equilibrium local cultures had in relation to reality, time, space, the person...At most, they imposed practices and customs that came from the same Mesoamerican cultural context. With Christianity, things were different. Christians, the same as the former invaders, burned temples and imposed their gods. But sharing or imposing theirs on what already existed was unacceptable to the Christians; instead they demanded the annihilation of local cults. They were not satisfied with eliminating the priests and part of the nobility; the Spaniards laid claim to a monopoly on the priesthood and the sacred, and thereby the definition of reality (1988: 195–196).

3. Norms and sexuality

Sexual norms in Mesoamerica and the entire American continent differed radically from those imported by Catholic missionaries. This is not to say that total liberty existed: that would be impossible in any cultural and religious system. But the prevalent norms revolved around a significantly different valuing of gender, sexuality and eroticism.

Some norms governing Indian society before colonization can be discerned in the records of their rituals. The transition to young adulthood required a family rite. Sahagun records speeches that Nahuatl parents addressed to their daughters and sons at that moment in their lives. The discourses reveal what the Aztecs considered dignified behavior in their society. It should be noted that continence, respect, humility towards elders and fulfillment of religious obligations were expected of both sexes. Even though similar behavior was not always expected from men and women, expectations for conduct in these areas were practically identical (Sahagun 1982). Likewise, both genders received equivalent punishments for the same sexual transgression (Torquemada 1615; Las Casas 1552).

Diego de Landa expressed his surprise at the ease with which marriages were dissolved. According to his Mayan chronicles, women could leave their husbands and change partners or return home without reproach (Landa 1966). In indigenous Mesoamerica, marriage was not indissoluble (Gruzinski 1986, 1987, 1988; Ortega 1987). Investigators mention provisional marriages in preconquest Mexico (Austin Lopez 1982b) and in Mayan culture a wife or husband could temporarily or permanently interrupt the marriage. But this was not so for the Spaniards whose influence on the Indians is described in following text by de Landa:

> (W)ith the same ease, men left their spouses and children with no fear that others would take them as wives...and now, since the Spaniards in this matter (when women leave their husbands for other men) kill theirs, they (the Mayans) begin to mistreat and even kill their wives (1966: 42—43).

In the Andean region of Peru, trial marriage, called "*sirvinakuy*", is still practiced (Barrionuevo 1973). Going back to Incan marriage customs, it survives as "a time of mutual service" when both parties try out their capacity for a harmonious, productive life together. If, after a year, one or both decide that the union does not have what is necessary for a permanent bond, they may separate and begin family life anew with another person with community approval.

4. Confession manuals

Lust, the priests complained, was the most frequent sin of the Indian converts, not stealing, murder, lying or drunkenness. In colonial documents concerning Aztec, Mayan or Incan morals, it is difficult to identify the value judgments of the Catholic evangelizers (Austin Lopez

1982a). Nevertheless, wide divergences between indigenous norms and Catholic morality are evident in the detailed questions of the manuals used by missionary priests to conduct confessions. Several areas of misconduct were probed, but the questions relating to sexual behavior were an important means used to inculcate Christian morality.

In his analysis of the confession manuals, Gruzinski discovered an exaggerated concern with sexuality as revealed by specific questions about sexual practices. For example, in the confession manual of Father John Baptista, 69% of the questions refer to sexual matters, while 63% of those of Martin de León and Juan de la Anunciación concern this topic. Such preoccupation with the sixth commandment, only one of ten, appears to reflect an uncommon, obsessive interest on the part of the confessors and/or of the institution whose beliefs they represented.

Thus, in the *Confesionario mayor en lengua mexicana y castellana* [Great confession manual in the Mexican language and in Spanish] by Alonso de Molina (1565) we find:

> Tell me, my son,
> Did you lie with a woman who was not yours?
> How many times?
> Did you lie with your wife making use of the proper entry?
> Or did you take her by the back way thus committing the nefarious sin (of sodomy)?
> How many times?
> Did you lie with your wife while she had her month?
> How many times?
> Did you lie with your wife avoiding the procreation of children?
> Because you are poor and needy or because you had a quarrel with her?
> How many times?
> When you were drunk, out of your senses, did you fall into the abominable sin of sodomy with another man?
> How many times?

> Have you done anything improper or dirty with yourself or with another man?
> How many times? (folios 32–35).

There were also questions specifically for women. In the *Confessionario en lengua Mexicana y Castellana* [Manual of confessions in the Mexican language and Spanish] by Father Juan Baptista (1599), we read:

> Are you a married woman, widow, virgin or have you lost your virginity?
> Did you have sexual relations with another woman like yourself and she with you?
> How many times?
> Did you desire anyone?
> Have you touched the lower parts of a man with pleasure, desiring in this way to commit sin? (folio 48, verso 51).

In another, *Manual de Administrar los Santos Sacramentos* [The manual for administering the holy sacraments] by Fray Angel Serra (1697), we find the following questions, also for women's confessions:

> Have you sinned with a woman while she took the position of an animal on all fours, or did you put her like that, desiring to commit sin with her?
> And have you sinned with another woman as if you were man and woman?
> How many times? (1731 ed., folios 111–136).

Even though these texts speak for themselves, it is important to stress that for the inhabitants of Mesoamerica, their bodies, their pleasures, the experience of sexuality must have been a very different matter. It was necessary to repeat these detailed questions hundreds of times in confession in order to instill the Catholic concept of sex as sinful. Even married life, legalized and blessed by the church, was subject to inquisitorial suspicion: "remember the times that...you provoked your wife in order to have access to her" (Molina 1569).

We also find in these manuals an immoderate zeal for quantifying, something alien to Indian thought (Gruzinski 1987). In the *Confessionario de Indios* [Manual of confessions of Indians] (1761), the priest Carlos C. Velazquez reports these answers:

> I desired to sin with my mother and had bad thoughts about many women. They can't be counted, I can't say how many times...sixty-six times (1761: 9—12).

A missionary explains:

> They finally say twice, and then for the rest of the confession, it is the same...these natives give the number used for the first sin they confess for all the rest (Gruzinski 1986: 35).

Francisco Guerra adds that these quantities had no meaning since the same numbers were repeated for all sins. According to Perez de Velasco in 1766:

> The Indian at the feet of the confessor is supremely inadequate...the rules (of confession) are for the Indian in most cases, impractical, due to his ignorance, his crudeness, his lack of breadth, his inconstancy, his great unfaithfulness...understanding we cannot give them (Gruzinski 1986: 36).

Studying the underlying reason for their exaggerated and repetitive quantification of sins, Gruzinski concludes that "without understanding and interiorizing the conceptual framework of Christianity, any attempt to total up sinful acts is as useless as it is senseless." The Indians chose numbers arbitrarily and repeated them. The use of numerical exaggeration and repetition, moreover, can be seen as a way of rejecting what was for the Indians a meaningless exercise. It served as a strategy to escape total control over their actions and lives.

In contrast to the sexual morality that the missionaries tried to impose on the Indians, however, the sexual abuses perpetrated by the Spanish appear even more startling.

The Spaniards regarded, as part of their booty, the "right" to sexually use all the female Indians in their territory. On the basis of this "right," landowners claimed the privilege of sexually abusing all virgin women on their plantations.

5. Sexual spirituality

While the Christian West has considered sex shameful and troublesome and great energy is dedicated to ascetic repression of sexual impulses, the ancient cultures of America placed it at the center of religious rituals:

> It is true that the Spaniards must have been hard pressed to understand the tacit joyful eroticism, openly practiced, of religious fertility festivals (Lopez Austin 1982b: 162).

Texts recounting these ritual practices are complemented by examples in terracotta figures. Funerary figurines of the Mochica and Chimu cultures in Peru and of the Nahua region of the Valley of Mexico show ceremonial and ordinary sexual practices of the inhabitants of ancient America. Despite the fact that objects with sexual content such as these were selectively destroyed by Catholic missionaries, some examples have survived.

In the confession manuals, Molina, Baptista, Serra and others repeatedly had to describe their limited idea of sexuality so that the vital and sexual Indians could understand that what for them was a link with the gods was, in their new religion, sin or aberration. Guilt was grafted onto the Mesoamerican conscience through evangelization. The morality of negation and abstinence propagated by the missionaries became one more weapon used in the process of violent colonization (Bastide 1947).

6. Goddesses in Mesoamerican religion

Concepts of the sacred, images of the divine, and ceremonial ritualization of the interaction between the divinities and humans give us insight into social structure as well. The gods of a culture are frequently reflections of its human members: divinity created in the "image and likeness" of women and men (Baéz-Jorge 1988).

In Mesoamerican civilizations, women, priestesses and goddesses express a particular form of being female. Coatlicue, Teteoinan, Toci, Tonantzin, Ixcuiname are some of the goddesses in the Aztec pantheon (Baéz-Jorge 1988; Marcos 1975, 1988). We will briefly mention Xochiquetzal and Tlazolteotl who are central to this essay because of their connection with sexual morality and what we refer to as sexual spirituality.

Xochiquetzal and Tlazolteotl were the Mesoamerican divinities to whom the Indians confessed. Both goddesses represented the female principle before whom penitents implored pardon for their transgressions. The power of these goddesses was invoked to counteract the harmful effects of their devotees' erring conduct.

The cult of these goddesses was a challenge to Christian categories. On one hand, Xochiquetzal is the goddess and patron of illicit sexual relations (Quezada 1975), and on the other, Tlazolteotl is the protector of fertility but also of abortion and, finally, both goddesses offer forgiveness through a confession ritual. Of course, in the Christian tradition there could never be divine protection for what is illicit, nor sacred wisdom for abortion, nor confession to incarnations of the feminine. Here again are elements of the Mesoamerican religious universe that did not fit the evangelizers' categories.

The panorama of divine feminine powers and deified presences included women who died in childbirth and were transformed into goddesses: the Cihuateteo who supported the sun from its zenith to its setting. The mother of god was Coatlicue. The mother of the people

was Tonantzin, and the Ixcuiname held up the sky as pillars of the Nahua universe. These sacred images gave the feminine pole importance. It was a very different symbolic universe from that of Christianity.

7. Song of the women of Chalco

The ancient Nahuas developed the art of poetry to a high level. Garibay gives us translations of the poetry in which the inhabitants of Mesoamerica excelled. Among the selected poems translated by this author, the "Song of the Women of Chalco" is one that for its erotic and metaphorical character and its sexual symbolism is important to include at length. (Chalco is a town near Mexico City).

Beyond its historical, political and ritual function, the song provides a glimpse into the language and metaphors of an eroticism where the playful voices of women express a sensuality at odds with sixteenth-century Iberian Catholic sexual morality. Though not "an isolated poetic phenomenon" whose uniqueness could possibly be due to the censoring of similar material (Austin Lopez 1982b), the Song of Chalco stands almost alone. Two other love songs are found in the same collection (Bierhorst 1985).

Full of metaphors, the song is a dialogue between various women and the warrior king Axayacatl.

Get ready, my little sisters:
let us go and gather flowers...
Oh, my little boy, give yourself to me, my darling boy.
Among joyful pleasures we will laugh.
I can't make room for the spindle:
How you enjoy me, my child!
What can I do? ... I accept!
Even though I wear a skirt and a blouse...

Come, take my tortilla dough, you king Axayacatito,
let me touch you...
Give it pleasure and raise up our snake,
again and once again!
Now I have no skirt, no blouse,
I am a little woman and here I am...
Slowly undo your skirts,
slowly open your legs, women of Tlatelolco,
those who are not going to war, Huhu!
keep your eyes on Chalco!
(Garibay 1984, V.III: 55–60)

The Song of the Women of Chalco recalls the Biblical Song of Songs, but this erotic Nahuatl poem is exclusively from the side of female experience and sensuality. It is the woman who is presented as inciting and directing the vital sexual force of the cosmos.

8. Conclusion

The sexuality that entered into conflict with the conquering ideology in Latin America cannot be precisely defined in modern terms. The only certainty is that its sense of eroticism, of the sexual in its sacred and vitalizing dimension, contrasted sharply with the dark and shameful view of sexuality of sixteenth-century Catholicism. It also contrasts just as sharply with contemporary ideas of sexuality and sexual liberation.

A half a millennium ago the process of subjecting the part of the world known today as Latin America to Iberian Catholic missionaries, soldiers and colonists began. In no other region was the arrival of Catholicism so abrupt or its imposition so violent. In Mexico, but also in Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia and Colombia, the appetites of the conquerors and the zeal of the missionaries combined to destroy indigenous culture.

While the first group exploited and abused the native inhabitants, the latter condemned their very way of existing in the universe.

The Indian population, steadily decimated by disease and the effects of exploitation, witnessed the repudiation of the norms that maintained their society in balance, the prohibition of their life-renewing rituals, the negation of their way of perceiving the cosmos and their place in it. Even their sense of their own physical bodies was tampered with and turned into a source of guilt. The detailed and inquisitorial confession manuals were weapons in the war of acculturation.

The inhabitants of Central and South America were told that their goddesses and gods and the forces of the universe they relied on were the work of the evil one. What for the Indians was their way of participation in the power and harmony of the cosmos was declared base and vile. The sexual, as a life-giving force, had sustained both the cosmos and the individual within a greater order. Its practice was surrounded by rules and norms whose observance was essential for the proper functioning of the universe. As the sustenance of the universe, it had a central role in collective religious ritual. To have it torn out of the temple and thrust into the dark underground, as it were, disrupted indigenous culture at its core. Through the repression of indigenous eroticism, Catholic morality shook the foundations of indigenous cosmology.

(English translation by Jacqueline Mosio)

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Pablo G. Wright

Iconography, intersubjectivity, and anthropological experience: A Toba shamanic tree[1]

1. Introduction

This article is an attempt to do an ethnography of my ethnography from fieldwork to final paper, on *nawe' 'epaq̣*, the Toba shaman's competition tree[2]. This present ethnography is based primarily on Victor Turner's vision of anthropology as experience (1985). Within this context I will try to review all the texts (written and visual) produced since I have contacted this particular kind of tree.

Between 1981—1984 I collected data on *nawe' 'epaq̣*, mainly oneiric material given to me by Alejandro Katache, a Toba shaman from La Primavera community (Formosa province, Argentina). Before I was ready to write an academic paper on this theme, I had already completed a short literary piece. This short story stimulated a colleague to sketch a picture about it. Then, Angel Achilai, a Toba friend, also produced a verbal and visual text about *nawe' 'epaq̣* while visiting me at my home in Buenos Aires.

In this paper I will summarize these experiences with this *nawe' 'epaq̣* through a chronicle-type style, regarding them as a series of *interactive texts*. These texts appeared to represent to me, in Paul Ricoeur's terms (1969), a grounded hermeneutic circle, which I will try to depict. In addition, I will reflect on the nature of the anthropological task, its circularity, and the notion of intersubjectivity.

2. Anthropology as experience

George Devereux, talking about ethnographic studies, commented that there is a special relation between the researcher and his topics of study. My "difficulties" with *nawe' 'epaq* were related to the kinds of academic discourses available to textualize it. Due to the fact that the "textual events" occurred in such an unexpected manner, I had to search for a new approach. I found this approach in the work of Victor Turner, and his appraisal of the anthropological experience.

Turner's approach is linked with Wilhelm Dilthey's evaluation of the concept of experience. Dilthey stresses the concept of *Erlebnis* 'experience' and hermeneutics as its interpretive tool. The experience is a structure composed of three aspects, (a) cognition, (b) emotion, and (c) volition. *Verstehen* 'understanding' is a process, an hermeneutic circle, which implies an intersubjective relationship between I-You. Here, an essential and reciprocal interaction between the parts and the whole within the lived experience makes possible the perception of *Erlebnis*. For Dilthey, understanding-interpretation is always a retrospective process, it is a reexperimentation of history.

Following this line of inquiry, I have found in Hans-George Gadamer's thinking a rich perspective on experience and history. Disagreeing with the Diltheian division between human and natural sciences, he tries to build a unified approach in terms of objectives and methods. Gadamer comments on the relevance of the idea of *tradition*, conceived as the basic context where we situate our historicity. We always think *from within* a tradition, and through dialogue between traditions, the fusion of horizons takes place. This fusion is based on the dialectics of question-answer, where the place given to language plays a central role. In dialogue, neither one of the speakers has control of the language. In a certain sense, it could be said that "language is speaking on our behalf". The fusion of horizons as a dialectical encounter enables us to know the historic finitude of our own tradition. This allows us to develop a reflexive stance toward the place from within which we think

and contact the world and initiate ties with other traditions (Ulin 1985: 100–111). Gadamer's key points are centered on the notions of tradition, history, and an ontological conception of language.

Ricoeur rescues the idea of the hermeneutic circle, giving a central role to language as the place of Being, and to interpretation as articulator of meaning. His critique of Husserl's theory of the subject and consciousness, along with the ideas of Marx, Nietszche, and Freud, allows him to find the realm of signification through an indirect path, regarding consciousness not as a producer but as a product of meaning (Ricoeur 1969, 1983).

Paraphrasing these philosophers, we could state that the anthropologist's Being is in "fieldwork" as context, and in "language" as a necessary relation with the "worlds" and/or societies with which he works. Viewing these two elements as central to anthropological practice, we can assimilate the conceptual contributions made by these authors. In this sense, I refer to the fact that anthropological knowledge has an intersubjective nature established between the researcher and his collaborators[3], mediated through language. This knowledge is generated dialectically within this provisory intersubjective realm and this encounter is framed within an historical situation where the fusions of horizons can occur.

Taking into account these considerations, my approach here stresses the existential nature of anthropological experience in a Sartrean sense. That is, that dialectics is constitutive of knowledge. Due to the fact that human essence is located in one's existence, I conceive anthropology as an existential experience about human essence. Like Turner (1985), I reevaluate the concept of experience highly criticized by structuralism, because it seems to be the only concept which belongs entirely to anthropology, one not borrowed from other disciplines.

In this essay, I will try to reexperience and rebuild the process of constructing *nawe' 'epaq̣*'s written and visual texts as they have appeared in my anthropological practice. The latter, defined not only as the traditional visit to an indigenous settlement, but also as the urban and daily interaction with peers, colleagues, family, and Toba guests at home

in Buenos Aires. Having in mind Dilthey's notion of experience, I will attempt to present an ethnographic draft of the triple aspect of our experiences: what we knew, how we felt, and the state of our volitions. Language and fieldwork – now redefined – will be our windows to see in which contexts our *nawe'* tree was planted.

3. Climbing the tree

My first contact with *nawe' 'epaq* occurred in July 1981 during fieldwork in a Toba community named Misión Tacaaglé, in the northeast of Formosa province[4]. I had been talking with an ancient shaman woman, Maria Yesoqna, about shamanism, with the help of Guillermo Muratalla, as translator[5]. At that time, *nawe*'s first branches showed up in a way not foreseen by me:

P. Wright: [to the translator] ask her how [the shaman] reached the moon.
G. Muratalla: they travel at night to the place the moon is located.
PW: when the *pi'oGonaq* [shaman] is sleeping he goes to the moon?
GM: he is sleeping, but there is one [a tree] named *nawe'*, [which] somebody climbs, for instance if there is a party with prizes above through a *caño* [mast], the young people go up [to the mast], *nawe'* is called. A kind of mast to climb, [where] somebody puts grease.
PW: do they play many times?
GM: yes, during the times of the priest [who founded the mission-colony by 1900].
PW: and this *pi'oGonaq* climbed the mast?
GM: yes, through *nawe'* ... a stick ... [he climbs] above.
PW: ask her which part of the *pi'oGonaq* goes out?

GM: she always responds that he travels, he must walk and travels up to the moon, for that reason [during] that time the people used to climb, and often somebody has fallen, the *doctor* [shaman] who fell down on the ground die ...

PW: which were the name of those *pi'oGonaq*'s fights, in [Toba] language?

GM: *ñi'igena*, so that, how can I tell, like a training ... training, for instance, like some play ...

In Tacaaglé I have recorded other data on *nawe' epaq*'s importance within Toba shamanism, and its place in the cosmological scheme. This information attracted my interest to the tree; however, it was my encounter with Alejandro Katache in La Primavera that deepened my interest. He shared with me his dreams on *nawe'*, full of realism and vertigo. My dialogues with him were carried out in October 1983:

A. Katache: I am dreaming *nawe'* ... I am dreaming *nawe'* ... *jodido* [hard] when you have dreamt that ... there are many *bichos* [beasts] ... in the water ... Once I was dreaming and I almost got sick, and there are many *bichos*, thanks to *njogonaq* [whistler] he helped me, he raised me ...

P. Wright: to climb?

AK: yes, I don't know [if was] the string of palm leaves ... or of *palo borracho* ... And later he raised me up ... Afterward they come all the alligators ... *bichos* ... but I don't know which kind of *bicho* ... And I am climbing ... Then *njogonaq* told me -grasp very tight-, after that he laced me ... then he catched [me] ... But ... [I was many days [in bed like a sick] and [I felt] like a fire here [in his calf] and I can't walk ... for two weeks ... lying without feeding, and then [he came] that *njogonaq* [and said] -after [that] you have to take a bath-. Later I am eating a leaf, the fruit [of] palm.

After the gathering of a substantial amount of information on *nawe'*, I concluded that something should be done with it. Since my Licenciatura

thesis in anthropology (Wright 1981), I had been interested in the Toba dreaming world. But this "dreamed-tree" signified a different kind of experience, where my very personal as well as my anthropological being was involved. Because that was the first field experience which I had trouble textualizing in an orthodox way, a different and unpredictable text soon appeared.

4. The story

Since my first meeting with *nawe' 'epaq* in 1981, I remained touched by the kind of dangerous experience it represented for the shamans performing that dream-climbing task. That oneiric and nocturnal place where the shamans arrived, thanks to the guiding help of their auxiliary spirits, was one of the main ways they could increase their power. I had been told Katache's dreams without the mediation of any translator, so I received a direct, first-hand testimony. That factor increased the force of his happenings. The cosmic architecture it seems to represent and the drama of the power dialectics motivated me to translate those images into a text. I felt *nawe' 'epaq*'s topic as a self-limited thematic unity, lacking any precedence in the literature, except for a brief report by Alfred Métraux (1967: 108) mentioning a dreaming tree used for shamanic training. But at the same time it was more than that. That semantic residue surpassed the conceptual formalization.

Toward the end of 1984 I wrote a short story about *nawe' 'epaq*, including elements of my field experience, especially Katache's narration, within a fictional argument. The argument incorporated many elements from the Toba worldview, for example, the ritual of dream initiation, the guiding role of the ancient shaman, and the presence of oppositions with symbolic value, like day-night, light-darkness, human-nonhuman, east-west. In addition, it marked the relationship between the renewal of fruits and the role of plants' spirits in that process. The

kin-type relation established between *Netoqki*, the main character, and the twilight-man resembles the traditional link that joins humans and nonhumans, where the latter is conceived as power granting entities. Finally, I chose the name *Netoqki* to honor a dear friend from Tacaaglé, whose Spanish name is Agustin Muratalla (Guillermo Muratalla's older brother). *Netoqki* was and still is one of my closest collaborators and friends in that village.

Beyond these considerations, thanks to the process of writing *La prueba crepuscular* ('The twilight test'), I was able to verbalize an inner experience that struggled to be expressed in some way. Its first manifestation was through a discourse of aesthetic nature. However, in Ricoeur's terms (1965), this "discourse organized by the Desire", is closely related to the subsequent texts derived from *nawe' 'epaq*, produced by new rotations of the hermeneutic wheel.

4.1 "The twilight test"

The sky started to change, its light deepening the shades of the forest's trees which showed their profiles of shady angles and circumvolutions. Gradually, the daily west was appearing with its clouds of war or human love: everything was ready, or almost everything.

Following the hunter's tracks, the young *Netoqki* walked slowly, his arms motionless, but giving to his legs a balanced gait. He was preceded by *Katoki*, his old master, and two friends his own age. For more than two hours they meandered through the *monte* [forest] which never changes its known scenario. Its multiple guests had already gone to their nocturnal dwellings. Only certain sighs could be heard toward the west, and its vagueness brought to the journey a dense quality.

When the path of the sky reached its zenith, they arrived at a clearing where *Katoki* stopped his walk. With a gesture, he motioned to them to be seated under the shade of an ancient *algarrobo* tree. In a whisper, the master started to sing, accompanied by his gourd rattle, changing the loudness of his voice in order to speak with his auxiliary spirits.

Having finished his song, he shared his vision with his disciples: it had been revealed that the test was going to be that very night, there, under that tree.

Netoqki controlled his breath, and drying with difficulty his forehead, he told the old man that he was prepared. His two friends, however, did not wish to continue the experience. Without losing his composure, *Katoki* said that perhaps, later, new signs would foreshadow better winds for them. After that, the youngsters returned to the village, now more distant than it was before.

The last reflections of the sunset had crossed the grove, piercing *Netoqki*'s heart; he knew that he was going to need all the morning sun's power to succeed in the test. Without any delay, he said for the second time, according to the rule, that he was ready. The master made him a signal, meaning that he should lay reclined against the *algarrobo*, turning his back to the sunset, and closing his eyes gradually. Almost in a whisper, he was told to think about the dreaming path they walked through a few moments ago, remembering the feats of the hero *taanki*'s successful fighting against the dangerous beasts of the forest during the ancient times of the origin of the world. Slowly he fell asleep. The landscape of the daily life started changing to become a completely different place. The sky, in a permanent sunset, adorned overhead a lagoon with a black wooden mast in the center. On the shore he saw faces of strange people talking to each other with eagerness. Their language seemed unknown to him, it was not his forefathers' dialect. He was at the mast's base thinking what to do when suddenly, from the water emerged the *viboron* [big snake], the mother of snakes, the *palometa* [saurel], and other monsters. Making large jumps, they attempted to bite him. Viewing this, he realized that the only exit would be by climbing the stick, but quite soon he discovered that it was almost impossible: the mast had a brilliant and slippery surface which prevented a firm grasp. The beasts came closer and closer before he was finally able to ascend a little bit. He wanted to know how far he was from the top, but when he looked up he realized that it was

impossible to tell. Then he began to request help from his old master because he was sliding down, toward danger.

After a few eternal moments, one of the *algarrobo* tree's spirits arrived silently. His appearance resembled a small tree with human-like extremities and a face with two bright red eyes. Without a word, the spirit pushed him toward the pinnacle. When *Netoqki* arrived there, as he looked downwards, he almost fell due to the vertigo caused by the appearance that the mast's base was more than five hundred steps below. In addition, powerful gusts of wind were blowing from the west bending the pole from one side to the other, weakening his already precarious stability. From the top he could see the whole crimson vault of the sky, and the strange shape of the forest surrounding the circular lagoon. A multitude of grey trees without leaves was scattered around, and many hunter's paths converged to the lagoon from very distant regions.

The people gathered on the lagoon's shore shouting with enthusiasm when he staggered, and jeered when he was able to climb. *Netoqki* felt that terror was invading his whole body, and he worried that the fear could reach his heart. Falling down to the water might mean his ruin, no power would be able to save him. For that reason, he had to overcome the fear, the wind, and the vertigo and jump into the water and get to the shore. Finally, when he decided to jump, *Netoqki* sung the melodies heard from the little *algarrobo*-man which helped him to fly down without danger. He fell into the water near a big piece of wood, but he had to intensify his swimming efforts because the beasts were approaching. When he was almost safe on the wooden piece, a *palometa* managed to nibble one of his calves. The pain was unbearable, and during several minutes he lay motionless in the circular water. Ultimately, when he could recover, one arm rowed while the other protected his wounded calf. After much time and with a strong effort, he reached the shore. Immediately, the people made a clearing around him, but soon they started reducing the space surrounding him and created a power circle to rob his life. *Netoqki*, defeating his panic and weakness, used the *algarrobo*'s song which refers to the arrival of the

fruit season to describe how the fruits are being offered as earthen products to men to rejuvenate them in the life cycle. The circle couldn't be closed due to the power of the song.

Later, a red-skinned man wearing rare clothes of snake skin and owl's feathers approached him. He was the Sundown Man, owner of those regions and proprietor of the dark tree. He said, "young man, you have passed the night world's dark tree test, now you can go but never return again, because you have been wounded by the *palometa*. Your courage is stronger than your fear, but another wound would be deadly for your shade-spirit. If you want to achieve more power you should obtain it within the morning's sun world. The injuries caused by the day world's *palometas* will not produce any harm to you, since now you are my grandson, and I am your grandfather". Without realizing the whole meaning of these words, *Netoqki* fell asleep on the shore.

After his double awakening, *Netoqki* was able to talk to the trees, understanding their undulated and subtle messages. *Katoki* taught him additional songs to heal and to thank the heavenly path and the morning star. The *algarrobo*'s juicy fruit seasonally nurtured his mystical organs, reviving them with a pleasant warmth. From time to time, when a dense twilight of the kind that doesn't want to change into night occurs, *Netoqki* suffers deep pain in his calf. Then, he can remember, even though he doesn't yet comprehend the words he received by the Red Man during the dream journey into the center of the night's world.

5. The first picture

A casual recounting of my story to a fellow worker and sociology student, Liliana Barberis, stimulated her to make a drawing of the images my words suggested to her. After many discussions about the story, she drew a picture by pencil on a 50 x 50 cm sheet. Here, she

selected the story's main events according to her point of view. According to her, the disposition of those events within the drawing followed a counterclockwise direction. Starting from the left upper corner, the four men could be seen walking across the hunter's track through the forest. The lower section on that side showed hands and fists half-closed, which expressed the defying public grouped on the lagoon's shore with their expectation of seeing the shamans falling one by one in the competition. Toward the right lower corner, was painted a shaman sitting near his instruments, and close to him, the young sleeper reclined against the *algarrobo*. The upper right sector shows a very visible and round moon. Toward the top center of the sheet, *nawe' 'epaq* emerges in the middle of the water, within a dry landscape of trees without leaves. Closer to the center is a diffused view of the old man's face against the surface of the lagoon, the Spiritual Guide of *Netoqki*'s dream journey. The latter is seen over the wooden piece floating on the water, trying to move away from the aquatic beasts. A final scene is placed in the middle of the right side, behind the *algarrobo*'s foliage, with the young man laying on the shore surrounded by the strange people who wanted his death.

When Liliana showed me the finished picture I experienced a deep amazement at the kinds of images she produced. Especially impressive was the "realism" of that sector of the Toba cosmos she seemed to have captured with great subtlety. Because of my personal predilection for dreams, and this dream in particular, the drawing has, for me, a sort of "objectification" more concrete than one produced only through words. Within this intersubjective stream of communication, I felt that we had continued a complementary chain of experiences, including the very people who experienced directly the *nawe' 'epaq* dream. A certainty that I was going to return to this place remained with me. Indeed, it was as I foresaw, only it was to be through a different discursive mediation.

6. The article

Early in 1985, I started to systematize the field material about *nawe' 'epaq* and the cosmic tree which seems to belong, from a conceptual point of view, to a unified body of cosmological notions. During that time I was concerned theoretically with Victor Turner's approach in *The forest of symbols*. I felt the need to identify symbols, not only in ritual (and "daily") contexts, but also within Toba dreams, mainly those related to *nawe' 'epaq*. The idea developed into the possibility of identification, exegesis, and interpretation of cosmological symbols not only as a methodological act, but also as a historic development. That is, to pursue studies on the symbolic horizon among the Toba as initiated by Elmer Miller (1975).

For the Toba, the universe has an axis which functions as a channel of communication and circulation between the different planes (Cordeu 1969–70), by which shamans and nonhuman entities move from one plane to the other. The first sensation I felt when I returned to Alejandro Katache's words (recorded in 1983) was of estrangement. It was caused by the fact that many of the elements included in my story which I suppose belonged to Katache's experiences, in fact were created or reelaborated by me, by my own literary imagination. In a certain sense, I was sometimes confused about who had said what and where. For that reason Alejandro's dreams lost most of their "sacred" character and "numinous" potential, perhaps because I already had my own representations to compare with his. Despite this "disenchantment", I carried out the systematization and analysis of *nawe*'s data. I began the task by analyzing "shamanic stories" depicted as those experiences lived by concrete persons who travel to other cosmic planes, or have contacts with nonhuman entities in dreams or while awake. Among the Toba, the dream experience is one of the most meaningful in ontological terms, allowing almost any person to have access to Reality, Power, and Knowledge (Wright 1992). In this regard, I found a coherency with the continuation of my earlier studies on the Toba evaluation of

dreams, concentrating on a bounded kind of dreaming experience as I see in the *nawe*"s. Present-day "shamanic experiences" show a symbolic mixture combining traditional with Christian entities. We can encounter travels to the end of the world, places inhabited by dangerous beasts, or encounters with angel-like creatures or speaking and shining bibles. One of the hardest dream experiences is called *ñi'igena* where shamans or candidates compete for power. Instead of including *verbatim* stories from my collaborators in the paper, I chose to gloss them, selecting their main features. Toward the end of the article, I identified some lexemes related to key Toba symbols. I can mention, for example, the heart and the gourd rattle as symbols of the container where power is stored. There lives the *lowanek*, a kind of auxiliary spirit that permits shamans to develop their activities; for instance, "to walk" during the night, to watch possible attacks from enemies, to heal or cause illness, etc. The paper's last section consists in the enumeration of those significant terms already identified and subjected to a first exegesis. Later, they will be integrated within a syntagmatic chain of intertwined symbols. The first exegesis identified two opposing groups in a complementary distribution; the possession of power on one side, and the lack of power on the other. Before that, ensembles of general terms which represent key cosmological classification are signaled; such distinctions as human-nonhuman, owner-dependent (exemplified with *no'wet* and *lowanek*), day-night (illustrated with better expressivity in the short story), vigil life-dream, center- periphery (we can think of the mast standing in the middle of the lagoon as a point of concentration of power). Finally, the complementary chain shows two sides. Within the "possession of power", I included ascent (or above)-earth-wind-health-filled-life. Within the "lack of power", I placed descent (or below, fall)-water (as a dangerous element)-illness-emptiness-death.

The paper remained on that level of analysis, that is, solely an enunciation of a syntaxis of power composed by a few terms. Had I returned to my field materials — speaking from my present point of view, six years later — I would have made a richer symbolic exegesis, and a stronger contextualization, depicting also the field of shamanic

sociology. I realize today that certain elements included in the short story were not analyzed by me in the 1985 article. I am speaking about a preliminary working hypothesis on Toba symbolism I was then contemplating. An example could include the oppositions east-west, or what happens to the shaman when he increases his power (the kinds of activities he can do, how his power is manifested, etc.), all of which can be read in "The twilight test."

As we will see later, the anthropological circle continued its motion, even though I was convinced at that time that little could be added to the *nawe*"s topic. I had not foreseen the events forthcoming, determined by the action of an independent factor — the presence of a *pagerel'ek* (name of the people from Tacaaglé) at my home in Buenos Aires.

7. The second picture

7.1 An angel in Buenos Aires

I have known Angel Achilai since my first field trip to Tacaaglé in 1979. Through the years we built a solid friendship nurtured by multiple dialogues about innumerable themes and many hunting and exploring walks through the Formosa's *monte*. He is a skillful hunter with a deep knowledge of plants and animals. Also, he is a member of the *Cuadrangular* church, having acted as an Elder. He has since resigned that position remaining as *obrero local* (local worker). He possess a land parcel consisting of three hectares and cultivates primarily cotton, corn, and manioc. After his first trip to Buenos Aires our relationship became closer than ever before. Angel arrived, in the early Fall of 1983, at my parents' home without any previous announcement. According to his words, it was the first time he had traveled to the Federal Capital and with only my address as guide he managed to find the house. During the day, while I worked, Angel spent most of the time talking to my mother and grandmother, watching TV, and making drawings. One

day, after a visit to the Buenos Aires Zoo, he started painting. At first he painted animals from his home in the forest, but soon he included *bichos* ('wild animals') that he had never seen before except in the Zoo (for example the elephant and the rhinoceros).

Our dialogues dealt generally with shamanism, cosmology, and mythology, Tacaaglé's situation, national and provincial politics, among other themes. When I recognized his talent as a painter, it occurred to me that he might illustrate those mythological characters we have been talking about. I told him that his pictures would help me to understand better what these mythical beings looked like. As an outcome of this proposition he made almost twenty color pictures with outstanding expressive and aesthetic qualities. Many of them I selected to include in a brief article I wrote on the symbolism of Toba mythical beings (Wright 1990). This paper began with an inquiry carried out in Tacaaglé and La Primavera, a neighboring Toba community, to find out if other people would be able to identify Angel's drawings.

After 1983, I met Angel many times in Tacaaglé, and we started using the "drawing technique" to explore not only the realms of cosmology and shamanism, but also toponymy, and band location. Until my fieldwork on November 1988, I had a quite "naturalist" conception about the pictures and schemes made by my collaborators. Especially, I believed that Angel's cosmological "maps" were objective evidence about a native worldview. My "critique of representation" began during that field experience when Angel was not able to identify *his own cosmological maps* (made on March 1987). To my astonishment, he said that he ignored the topic and the maker of those drawings. Then I realized how far my own topological model was from Angel's who could design his cosmological concepts through very different representational models. In addition, the written and/or graphic representation obviously had different meanings for him than for me.

7.2 Encounter with "The twilight test"

Ever since his first trip to Buenos Aires, Angel had always announced his wishes to return. One day, his wish was realized. In March 1989, he came back with two purposes: 1) to obtain clothes for the next winter, and 2) to visit me. He stayed approximately one month in my home. During that time we strolled throughout Buenos Aires, meeting officials from the *Cuadrangular* church headquarters and other evangelical churches, asking for used clothes to be distributed among the Toba. Likewise, we visited Toba migrants living in Buenos Aires and suburban areas. While I was at work, he remained in my study which, at night, was transformed into his bedroom. There, he used to listen to my recorded interviews of the Tacaaglé and La Primavera people. He listened with great attention and emotion, especially to the voices of friends and relatives passed away. Sometimes he helped to clean the house, for example, sweeping the patio or washing our old *Citroen Ami*. My wife and I were amazed by this patent act of what we understood as reciprocity (a key social principle among the Toba). My children incorporated him as a member of the family and this recognition took on a verbal vehicle: they named his room (my study) *el cuarto de Catin* ('Catin's room'). The name "Catin" was created by my daughter, Maria, as her acoustic interpretation of the Toba name *taanki'*, by which Tacaaglé people call me. The children started calling him "Catin", and very quickly he accepted it as one of his referential names.

Angel's arrival, in 1989, coincided with the beginning of an hyperinflationary cycle in the Argentine economy. The social context was not any better and my own economic situation was very close to bankruptcy. My financial weakness showed up dramatically when I couldn't afford Angel's return bus ticket. In 1983, I was single and I hadn't any problems to buy his return ticket. All these elements together put me in a strange mood. On the one hand, I felt Angel's coming as a pleasant and friendly visit, while on the other, I would have preferred that he arrived in a more propitious context. Part of my anxiety was channeled toward working hard with him, conceptualizing his visit as

a sort of "reciprocal fieldwork", as stimulating as unexpected. Indeed, we talked a lot and the material was registered in fieldnotes and cassettes. Knowing about my predilection for pictures, Angel made many drawings. The first one was a mythical Indian with inverted knees; the second, a forest dog with red (nonhuman) eyes; the third, *wa-Gajaqa'lachigi*, the trickster character of traditional mythology. He described with detail the trickster's dress and feather attire. Then I commented to him that I would like to have a picture of a shaman with his auxiliary spirits because he had never made one. At that time an idea occurred to me. What would happen if I presented Angel with Liliana's picture of "The twilight test"? Would he "recognize" that representation as something understandable in his terms ? Finally, I decided to do so. While we were looking at the picture (a reduced xerox copy), I told him my story, stating that the main ideas had been borrowed from Alejandro Katache's dreams. He manifested a strong interest in the story itself, nurtured also by his close kinship to Katache. So, we analyzed the drawing step by step. As soon as he stammered across the word *pi'oGonaq* ('shaman') I asked him if the old man sitting looked like a shaman. He agreed and asked me if the bottle-like object near the shaman was a gourd for wine. From his point of view, the shaman might be drunk because he was naked, while the young man was not. Angel requested my explanation as he was unsure about that fact. I indicated the place where the dark mast emerged in the middle of the water to see if he could identify it, but he didn't behave as I had hoped.

PW: how is the picture? I asked him.
AA: very good,*che*, that is a tree, signaling to *nawe'*.
PW: seems to be, isn't it? which tree seems to be?
AA: I don't know, I can't see quite well ... I don't know ... seems an *epaq* [generic word for tree].

He continued describing the pictures, that there were many trees, and perhaps also aborigines right there. Regarding the hands, I told him that they belonged to people who were angry, according to my story,

and that the artist had made them that way. When he turned his sight again near *nawe'* he asked if that man was checking the piece of wood with the purpose of entering it, or something of the sort. I told Angel that, according to the story, this man was trying to climb the wooden piece to get away from the aquatic beasts. He had climbed to the top of the stick in order to jump down and get to the shore with the help of the wood. The man had to avoid every attack from those *bichos* because they were very dangerous. To make my statements more clear, I said to him that the man climbing the wood was the young man reclined against the *algarrobo*; he was dreaming, and the events were happening to him. Again I wanted to see if he could recognize this episode:

PW: don't you know this *ki'oGonaq*'s history?
AA: no, not yet-, he replied.

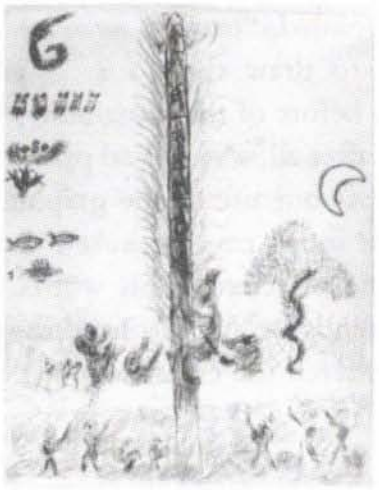
With my anxiety building, almost as a reproach, I exploded, "but you told me something about that in Tacaaglé!". Then, I felt his answer as a triumph patiently awaited. Such a fervor moved my interview almost to a point where I was feeding the answers I wanted to Angel.[6] He responded "ahhh, that is *nawe*'!" I replied, "of course!". Afterward, I asked him if he was aware of *nawe*''s history. He said he was and pointed out that the young shamans had to climb to the top during dreams. He added an opinion about the picture, "indeed ... very good, *che*, how they ... draw!" (referring to the one who drew the picture). That moment, interrupting his words, I looked for the story's original picture as we had been utilizing a reduced copy. Handling the original, we could see more details, making possible a "better" analysis. Then we talked about the story's sequences illustrated by Liliana. I pointed out that the vague face stumped on the water was the old shaman guiding the young, and that the trees and the whole place belonged to the Night Beings' world (*pel'ek*). Angel, picture in hand, offered multiple exclamations in Toba and Spanish, and I felt happy for the possibility to talk about images referring to well-known Toba experiences, but less than irreducible for a *doqshi* (non-Toba).

From then on he started mentioning the nature of the tree, the procedure of increasing power, and the kind of nonhuman beings with whom climbers might come into contact there. For me, it still wasn't clear why the tree has its power (my inquiries had even then a very substantialist conception). He responded, "because *no'wet* is within, all those ... [beings] we are going to draw them for ... your better understanding".[7] I hadn't thought before of that possibility, I was glad about my friend's initiative which, after all, was a usual practice between us. As I have said before, I felt that our use of the graphic representations eased our dialogues, at least in my case, because I could understand more appropriately what kind of referents his words were indicating. In this regard, I studied attentively Angel's hand drawings and his version of *nawe' 'epaq*, and registered the comments made.

7.3 Angel's tree

While making the picture, Angel explained its scenes. They showed a man climbing through a stick with red flames leaving from within and aquatic beasts looking toward that subject. The lower section showed two persons sitting and a group of individuals standing. They were waiting their turn to go up. Inside the mast, Angel placed the powerful nonhuman beings according to their hierarchy; the higher, the mightier. As far as the shamans could ascend, the more power they would receive. After many days we returned to our earlier conversations on *nawe'*. For a better documentation, I thought it would be useful if Angel explained the tree's picture using his mother tongue. This would make a clearer identification of the entities and figures included in it, and from a more scholastic point of view, the proof of key lexemes associated with shamanism and cosmology. In addition, I wanted to check to what extent Liliana's drawing and my story had influenced Angel's verbal and visual texts. Finally, beyond all these considerations, Angel's tes-

timony introduces us, through the Toba genre of shamanic stories, into the realm of power competitions.



7.4 Angel's words (in translation)

This is the black tree, this is the black tree
here is the earth, here is the earth
and there are the aquatic beings
whose owners are the shamans.
There are the shamans
they are looking upwards to the black tree
raising up their arms,
and the shamans say their words
raising up their arms:
– it would be fine if the others
could not arrive up there!
– it would be fine that
they remain there where they are,
it would be good that they don't reach the top,
the pinnacle, thus our power will remain equal!

Those who raise up their arms are saying that the others couldn't
reach
the top.
It would be fine that
the others
couldn't arrive upwards
to the stick's top,
to make our power
equal to one another. OK, then,
the shaman climbed,
what he sees there
might become his property.
Then the shaman climbed,
and first he talked,
he talked with the father of the trees,
he talked with the father of the trees.
Then again he continued,
and started talking with the father of snakes,
because he reached the place where the father of snakes was
located.
Later he climbed up to
the place of the owl, father of birds,
the big [owl]. Then
he climbed higher and there was
the Man, the forest's Man.
After that he arrived to where
that man is located who is said belongs to the country.
Later he climbed upwards where *no'wet* was located
[and *wagajaqa'lachigi*]. There was *no'wet*
and he was approaching
to the *wagajaqa'lachigi*'s place.
Then
he reached where *wagajaqa'lachigi* was.
After, he approached the last, *taanki*',

taanki', the owner of everything,
of anything within the black tree.
Then the shaman climbed up to the top,
and met with *taanki'*,
the owner of all the *lowanek* that are here.
Then he met with *no'wet*, because *no'wet*
taanki', he [*no'wet*] is also an owner, both are friends.
Later it occurred there that
the [aquatic] animals were looking upwards
towards that black tree. Then
the water [showed] a light [a bright]
viewed as red
within the water.
Then there was a tree and
a snake on
that tree.
Then the little
moon was clearly visible.
Then
[they] heard carefully
the aquatic beings, all
heard carefully [to detect any noise].
Then [the man] reached the
top of the black tree
so after that
is the most powerful.
If he can't reach the top,
the man that is climbing,
if he reaches the middle,
the shaman will stay in
the middle, and after he will fall down
into the fire.
For that reason after [that]
he becomes sick, he becomes feverish, he gets sick.

Then other shaman comes
and helps him [healing him]. Those
two sitting
those two
were a sort of persons in charge,
those two sitting,
were *no'wet*'s dependents,
one of them was a *no'wet* dependent,
while the other that was sitting
was a *taanki'* dependent.
Those two
were writing [making notes]
sitting under
the tree.
Afterwards
[another] climbed through [the tree]
climbed, and later he looked
from the tree's top,
and from there he could see all
[the tree] which entered [downwards] in the middle of the water.
Thus, in this way
they make their competitions,
they go
to that black tree in
the water, and from within the black tree emerged
a brilliant light and also flames
[from] that black tree.
However, [the shaman] who didn't ascend
has very little power.
Then, the shamans have to
go to the black tree
to increase their power,
because if not they will have but little power.
Because within the black tree

there are men [powerful beings]
in the middle [inside]
there are men [powerful beings] within the black tree.
So, the one who climbs through
that black tree
can talk with those men [powerful beings]
and incorporate power from them,
increasing thus his power.
In that way the one who
can't climb remains like before,
his power remains like that,
his power, thus, is little.
Then, that [thing] there
which is in the side [of the drawing]
oh!, yes, indeed it is
a symbol, they are symbols,
the first is the one, the *tararira* [a fish],
then becomes the first [number],
after that it becomes two [fishes], then it is the [number] two.
Later they come the ostrich's legs,
and two [pairs] of birds' eggs,
after the owls and the snake there [signaling].
Then, there [within the tree] are men [powerful beings]
you can meet.
After that you can encounter
there the birds, and you can
you can talk
with any bird.
You can tell things to them
and for example *wi'iyin* [a bird] can tell you,
and it can tell you for example
— go you [close] to the water
and you will find water's inhabitants
and the father of alligators.

Then they compete seriously
those men [the shamans],
going to that
[lagoon], a big water, where the black tree is rooted
black tree, and if you don't climb
then
your power will remain as is,
your power [thus] is small.
Instead, if someone [can] climbs
then he will have very big
his power,
his power will be great,
his power. If you reach the
pinnacle, then you will have a great
power. Then nobody will
hurt you [become sick], and a lot
you will heal, you will save many people.
Then, if you meet
with the father of snakes, then if somebody
is bitten by a snake, you will be able to heal,
and he will be cured.
And if there appeared somebody
bitten by *a'eloq* [a sort of alligator], you will heal him
and he will recover. If you go
to *mariscar* [hunt] in the country,
meeting with
any country's being [a powerful being],
then if there is a man
of the country with a strange aspect
forcing you [because of the fear] to get lost [in the country] then
    you will be able to heal
and cure [that disease]. In addition, you can
meet with
a Sky's inhabitant [powerful being], then you will be able to
    move

across the sky, you will move through
the sky, walking above the
sky. When you walk [or fly] there
you will become aware of your great power,
thanks to it you will be able to go within
the earth there where the earthlings live
under the earth.
There is the black tree
on the water.
The black tree is sunk very deep within [and below]
for, the earthlings
climb through during the night,
those strange [beings]. Then those spirits [shadows]
talk with the
[shaman's] spirit. Then all is done,
which other
words I might say
about the black tree, only that
when there is a competition, the people
test their power.
If they have a great power
[they can] reach the top,
then [they] will have much power.
Now it seems to
conclude here, Pablo.

7.5 Narrating the drawing. Two readings

I didn't make the transcription of the Toba comments during Angel's stay. Valentin Moreno, a Toba living in Buenos Aires helped me in that task. He detected interesting linguistic differences between his dialect from Las Palmas, Chaco, and Angel's northeastern dialect. Besides, he commented that the person who had talked about *nawe'* was

surely a *pi'oGonaq* because he seems "to know" many things. Among the first issues I discovered in Buenos Aires about Angel was the fact that he actually possessed shamanic power. He himself told me about it, proving my early intuitions concerning his existential status. In Tacaaglé, on the other hand, he was reluctant to answer that question, only giving ambiguous statements. When I requested if he ever had a *nawe'*-like dream he responded positively, but making it clear, "I only reached a little bit farther than the middle!"

I translated *nawe'* into English as "black tree" because that is the main meaning of the word literally. In symbolic terms, the color black is associated with nonhuman's power, and with death. Angel's explanation of his picture shows an original interpretation about the theory of power, degrees, hierarchies, and modes of circulation from the nonhuman to the human world and vice versa. Some parts of his drawing have been influenced, in my opinion, by Liliana's picture and my story; for example, the moon, the aquatic beasts looking upwards, and the shamans waiting for their turn on the shore. An additional motivation of Angel was his knowledge that Alejandro Katache was the source of the most impressive dream material I had ever recorded. Among the most original element Angel drew, previously unknown by me, is the hierarchy scheme of the nonhuman beings. Within this power scale, he placed *taanki'* (the cultural hero) in the higher position, followed by *waGajaqa'lachigi* (the trickster) and *no'wet* (a powerful deity related to shamans and hunters, see also note 6). This order seems to indicate a conceptual effort made by Angel to "classify" a cluster of entities for their graphic representation. Regarding their number, there exists a discordance between the beings painted inside the tree and those mentioned in Angel's oral explanation. In the picture there are six beings, and the same number is observed in the curious numeral system proposed by the painter. The system expresses quantities either through the addition of individual animal species or by a similarity between animal morphologies and numerical patterns. On the other hand, Angel talked about eight nonhuman inhabitants of the *nawe'* tree when he commented on his picture. In later interviews, I found out

Angel had spoken about a transformation of *waGajaqa'lachigi* into *no'wet* after a mythical fire catastrophe.[8] For that reason, it could be speculated that both beings would occupy a single place within the tree's power hierarchy. Besides, as a personal hypothesis lacking any statements by Angel, I believe that the Forest Man (*hawjaGal'ek*) and the Field Man (*ne'enaGal'ek*) could also share their positions in the power ranking. What has been said might explain the assembly of four beings into only two, *nawe*''s power locus. The idea of *taanki'* as the most powerful being appeared clearly for the first time to me, despite the fact that I already had knowledge about his high rank within the mythological pantheon.

Angel's verbal and visual images about the tree are quite suggestive regarding its nature. Indeed, it was presented as a "burning" mast with red flames. This fire is the substance of power — where fire and light *are* the power (cf. note 8). The red color of *nawe'* contrasts with the "dark" nature of the tree my Toba collaborators told me about in Tacaaglé and La Primavera. Perhaps it could be viewed this way: both red and black are connected to the idea of power. Black may also have links to the nightworld while red is more related to the idea of power itself. My story and Liliana's drawing showed, according to my previous information, a dark tree that exists in the cosmological realm of night-dream. Angel's doesn't mean explicitly any tie with the night, but with the notion of power, where the red color is one of its manifestations as he continually indicated in his other paintings (see Wright 1990, for example).

As a new fact about *nawe'* I didn't record in Formosa, Angel said that those who did not succeed in ascending fell into the fire. The aquatic beasts are expectant of every climber's fate, but they do not try to bite the losers. The aquatic beings' presence seems to indicate metonymically the dangerous nature of the water or the aquatic in Toba symbolism.[9] Angel said that reaching the stick's top signifies the possession of power. As an example, he stated that an encounter with the "father of the birds" indicates the ability to understand bird language. Meeting the "father of the snakes" merits acquisition of the skill to treat snake bites. An encounter with the "Sky Beings" (*pigeml'ek*)

implies the possession of a superb power to "fly" and/or "walk" across the upper and the subterranean planes. In this regard, Angel clarified the kind of capacities that could be derived from an encounter with the powerful beings. For instance, the ability to communicate with animals or plants, and the logical acquisition of knowledge and power to find food, heal sick persons, or travel across the universe.[10]

The reference to *nawe'* as penetrating into the depths of the earth probably has more connections to the cosmic tree which sustains the structure of the universe than to the tree's competition. This fact may return us to an earlier idea cited in the beginning of this paper concerning the possibility of a conceptual unity integrating "both" trees. Clearly, the division into two trees is an analytical product of my efforts to understand Toba cosmology. They were oriented to the building of a comprehensive model using the metaphors at hand, provided mainly by the scholarly literature on the Toba and the Gran Chaco aborigines. Angel's allusion is remarkable in that inhabitants from within the earth could climb by *nawe'* and meet the shamans. The latter as shadow-spirits and the former as *lk'i* ('image-soul') enter into contact with the night world. The night is the proper place of the underground plane's inhabitants, and the specific lapse where shamans work. Within that threshold between living and dead, day and night, shamans develop their career. The picture shows a probable syncretic element related to the biblical tree of Wisdom of the Good and the Evil. His condition as a *creyente del Evangelio* ('Gospel believer') provides the eidetic background to this representation.

Angel is very explicit about the interest of the shamans in maintaining a sort of egalitarian status in terms of power. That interest takes them to the point of wishing the failure of their peers in climbing the tree. From my point of view, *nawe*"s competitors' morals tend to avoid accumulation and to value a balance of power among them. It seems to exist, on the one hand, as a vertical device which promotes the increment of shamanic power, while on the other, as a horizontal device facilitating an equal distribution among everybody. Power circulation is traumatic and its process usually implies recurrent states of health and/or illness among those whom have contact with nonhuman beings.

8. Getting down the tree

At this moment we stop the hermeneutic wheel, which always implies a temporary lapse that will be followed by an inevitable and continuous motion. What has been said and drawn by Maria Yesoqna, Guillermo Muratalla, Alejandro Katache, Liliana Barberis, Angel Achilai, and written by me should be considered only as provisional schemes. These schemes should be regarded as a sort of models-to-be-built-upon, as are human theories and explanations, especially in our case where people with different socio-cultural and historic backgrounds have met through *nawe*'s existential texture.

Like the shamans, anthropologists, in a certain way, could act as epistemological mediators (Schmidt 1987: 62), linking different domains of reality as conceived by their societies of origin and by their collaborators' communities. I tried to exemplify here an experience of a circular anthropological work, placing myself as a kind of "textual chronicler" (accounting for some of the main facts that constructed all these versions of *nawe*'). This circular experience confronts us as subjects-anthropologists – rare methodological constructions of the Western episteme (Foucault 1968) – to existential situations full of interaction and dialogues with the traditional Others (Fabian 1983). The search for an epistemological space which could give foundation and legitimation to this contact might be closer to a concept of intersubjectivity based upon a dialectical conception of existence. An intersubjectivity woven where a concrete action placed within a defined socio-historic context constitutes and is being constituted by the intercultural encounter. The dialogue is realized from within the cultural and linguistic traditions (the researcher's and the collaborator's), but that contact shows, as we already heard from Gadamer, an autonomy of language. In this "fusion of horizons" the stream of communication has its own rhythm and movement, different from the speaker's own. The experience with the different discourses about *nawe* could be a case of such autonomy, where new discursive (oral, written and/or visual)

versions are yet in preparation. I ended the exposition of this ethnography of my ethnography to prevent a tedious, limitless monography.

In this anthropology of the anthropological experience made as a chronicle, there were different discursive productions in which central connectedness was the issue of the Toba black tree. I tried to depict ethnographically the triple (Diltheian) structure of experience that linked many selves with that tree. I intended to reflect on the process of "reflexive performance" (Turner 1985: 187) that connected in a dialectic way, directly or indirectly, many persons during a given spatial-temporal frame. From my vision of native-subject-ethnographer, I testified about the different texts produced in relation to *nawe'* and the historic nexus that approached them reciprocally. These productions shaped a series of "interactive texts", sharing a recurrent shamanic theme. Angel's role after his first "Buenos Aires experience" acquired a new dimension. A new interactional space emerged between us, and that space gradually nurtured all the *nawe*"s productions. In addition, the encounter between different interests created a new place through a continuous interaction of dreams, trees, and pictures. There I found a novel space of "common" interests and issues that our own history has been creating. The presence of Liliana, a member of my own cultural tradition, but developing a different function than me, produced an element — her drawing — which articulated my dialogues with the Tobas. For her, my field experience and the short story added a field of living experiences that felt as strange in the beginning. Later on, these experiences lost their alien character for her, turning themselves into the familiar in the measure her drawing had started creating a reality no longer "hers" or "mine", but intersubjective. That common field of knowledge was revitalized when Angel made contact with the short story, the picture, and then, added his footprint. Angel added his own tree to the "Tree's Topic", widening in an unexpected manner this contingent intersubjective and "arboreal" realm.

An epistemological space based upon intersubjectivity and the valuation of language as the place of Being might shape an adequate frame to locate the peculiar features of anthropological practice *vis-a-vis* the

entire human experience. Anthropological experience could be depicted as an experience oriented toward the inter- or transcategorial (on the edge of the commonsensical cultural categories), defined, of course, in existential terms. The discovery of alien social structures often produces a process of objectification of the researcher's own social categories. The process is not always homogeneous but usually eases the incorporation of a critical attitude into our structure of existence. For that reason, I consider pertinent Ricoeur's opinion about the possibility of doing a *critical hermeneutics* which could objectify the range and contents of our own tradition (Ferrater Mora: 1979 [1496]). The dialogue with the Other — whether living far away from or in the same neighborhood as the researcher — would be as similar as a process of *reciprocal deobjectification.* In this regard, I have doubts about the possibility of reaching a radical setting in parenthesis of each cultural tradition's prejudices as stated by Husserlian phenomenological approaches. On the contrary, I think that the encounter among different persons — the common landscape in anthropology — supposes a dialogue *despite* our mutual prejudices, one of the keystone traits in the strange situation of intercultural meeting.

The efforts to build an epistemological as well as a methodological intersubjectivity has anthropology as a supplier of contexts of human interaction and worldviews alternative to our Kantian space-time framework. Perhaps we should hear more carefully the dialogues of Angel Achilai with Julio Cortazar, Alejandro Katache with Ludwig Wittgenstein, or *Netoqki* with the ethnographer Jorge Luis Borges.[11]

Notes

1. An early version of this paper was presented at the *III Reunión Latinoamericana sobre Religión Popular y Etnicidad*, Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia (ENAH-INAH), Mexico City, June, 1990. I express my gratitude to my Toba collaborators and friends Maria Yesoqna, Alejandro Katache, Angel Achilai, Guillermo Muratalla, Agustin Muratalla (*netoqki*), and Val-

entín Moreno, for their help and patience to my inquiries. Also, I thank my colleagues in Buenos Aires, Ezequiel Ruiz, Lia Bargallo, and Rita Segato for their scholarly interchange. Liliana Barberis deserves special mention for her artistic abilities to create a drawing of my story. I thank my wife, Inés, who corrected many times the original in Spanish. In Philadelphia, Richard Freeman corrected my English and made useful comments on the paper. Cheryl Aldin also helped me to deal with my first English draft. Elmer Miller made invaluable suggestions and criticism. Finally, I am indebted to Luther Martin and Michael Pye for their invitation to give a paper to the IAHR-NAASR conference upon which the current volume is based.

2. The Toba (linguistically a Guaycuruan group) live in the Chaco region of Argentina, (Salta, Chaco, and Formosa provinces). Since the early 1960s, many Toba have migrated to urban centers like Resistencia, Formosa City, Rosario, and Buenos Aires. Traditionally they were hunter-gatherers organized in nomadic bands ruled by exogamy. Nowadays they are settled in agricultural sedentary communities, working seasonally in the cotton harvest on neighboring farms.
3. The nature of the anthropological encounter has been discussed by many authors. Inspired by Ulin's ideas (1985, 1991), I identified two great trends. The first I call the "political-epistemological" side, where I include, for instance, Scholte 1972, Diamond 1974, Asad 1975, Fabian 1983, Rigby 1985, Mudimbe 1988. The second, which I name "textual-epistemological", involves the so-called postmodern anthropology, especially Tyler 1978, 1988, Marcus-Fischer 1986, Clifford-Marcus 1986. I will not deal here with the specific political implications of fieldwork in anthropology, because I have discussed that topic elsewhere (Wright, 1991).
4. Between 1981—1985 my field studies as a CONICET's Fellow were directed towards Toba religious syncretism. During the 1981 trip I had begun to gather my first data on Toba shamanism.
5. Guillermo Muratalla was my Toba host in Tacaaglé in almost all my campaigns. He was the *encargado* ('person in charge') of the community administration, within the structure of the former Formosa's *Instituto Provincial del Aborigen* (IPA) (Provincial Institute of Aborigine affairs).
6. In Devereux's terms (1967) I was transferring to Angel my own expectations and wishes. On the other hand, Angel started to "counter-transfer" to me his own interpretation.
7. In the recent literature about the Toba it is possible to identify two approaches in the analysis of *no'wet*. On the one hand, for Cordeu 1969—

1970, *no'wet* refers to a general category of the numinous and, also, to a certain kind of powerful nonhuman beings. Tomasini and Braunstein 1975 agree in general with Cordeu's statements. On the other, Miller 1975 and 1979 mentions *no'wet* as a powerful entity of the earth's surface level, and Buckwalter 1980 states that *no'wet* are guardian spirits of nature. These differences in the analysis of *no'wet* are based, in my opinion, more in the researchers' theoretical orientations than in the very nature of the native concept. Cordeu, Tomasini, and Braunstein shared a phenomenological approach which assumed the existence of "general categories of existence" like human/nonhuman, sacred/profane, etc. Miller and Buckwalter, on the contrary, based their analysis on the native categories themselves, not having any necessity to look for more general concepts.

8. Actually, *waGajaqa'lachīgī* has the ability to transform himself into a lot of things, but I never have heard before such a transformation into *no'wet*.
9. Miller 1975 and 1981 analyzed the symbolic value of water and fire in Toba cosmology. For him water is related to danger and the female realm, while fire is linked with shamanic power and the male ambit.
10. Cordeu 1969—1970 and Miller 1975 mentioned the importance of the shamanic capacity to fly as a proof of power.
11. The literary works of the Argentine writers Cortazar and Borges (and perhaps also the Colombian, Gabriel García Márquez and the Cuban, Alejo Carpentier), are constructed, in my view, with a perspective as similar as the anthropological. Indeed, their texts show an existential texture very close to the anthropological *Dasein*. In addition, these authors use analytical as well as aesthetic tools that could help us in dealing with the intersubjective nature of field experience.

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Ivan Strenski

Political culture, religious culture and sacrifice

1. Sacrifice and the political culture of spirituality

The term, "sacrifice", has taken on new life in recent times. I refer to the spectacular sacrificial ritualism of some of the native religions of Latin America, such as Santeria or Voudon, but more so to notions of civic sacrifice or altruism put into question in the current market-oriented development drives in both Eastern Europe and Latin America. This discussion is devoted to the proposition that the ritual sacrificial and civic sacrificial domains may share certain affinities for each other, or, in the language of a more recent theoretical discourse, a common structure. The first upshot of this is at least to open an investigation into the question of whether we can correlate the presence of a sacrificial religious ideology with a sacrificial social ideology.

But more than ideology, I want to urge that the domain of culture should take center stage in considering the relation of politics and religion. By this I mean that when we speak of religion and politics, what we should mean is not merely the relation of schemes of ideas, or ideologies, but cultures or entire modes of life. Thus, on the side of religious culture, we would want to consider, for example, the subject of spirituality — the often systematic way people conceive of living, acting, feeling, singing, thinking and graphically or plastically rendering what we call their "religion".[1] Here, I have in mind the scheme of integrated living, replete with diet, physical regimen, daily routine, mental attitudes, preferred imagery, physical posture, deportment, clothing, gestures, mental exercises and such connected with, say, the *Vi-*

suddhhimagga, or the hierarchic progression through life stages known as the *varn-srmadharma*, styles of religious life linked with Ignatius' *Spiritual exercises*, Benedict's *Rule*, the rigors of Carmelite or Saint-Sulpician religious cultures. On the side of political culture, we might want to think about the whole panoply of attitudes, symbols, behaviors, practices, policies and so on which people put into practice in what we call political life. Here we count the many styles of kingship, from absolutism to those supposing a certain social contract, replete with their various kinds of court music and art, their different modes of dress or architecture, their regulation of speech and manners, and so on. Likewise, I refer to the different particular modes of being democratic, modes which range all the way from the direct "participatory democracy" of anarchist or consensus political cultures to various kinds of representative governments rich in their own history, traditions, rules, and forms of etiquette. Anyone observing the differences between deliberations in England's House of Parliament and the American House of Representatives will know what I mean here.

If we shift to the domain of culture, the questions we will want to ask about sacrifice will change. Do certain religious (explicitly sacrificial) cultures favor certain political or economic cultures? Or, do they discourage them? Will, for example, the Poles be better disposed to make the economic and political "sacrifices" demanded by their transfer to a market economy because of the powerful role in their religious formation of a sacrificial eucharistic spirituality or religious culture that derives from the Counter-Reformation? Or will the oppressiveness of the classical sacrificial religious culture make more difficult the emergence of the kind of responsible, sober, bourgeois individualism that Tocqueville, among others, thought essential to a durable democratic culture? Similar questions could be posed in the Latin American context, given the dominance of similar sacrificial theologies of the eucharist and religious cultures in Spain and Latin America. In both places the Jesuits, Carmelites, the cults of the Sacred Heart and blessed sacrament, for instance, played vital roles in forming national spiritualities.[2] The work of Jean A. Meyer on the "Guerra de los Cristeros" suggests, for

example, that we might bring this Counter-Reformation religious culture to bear on discussions aimed at understanding the complex fervent Catholic resistance to consequences of the Mexican revolution (1975: 186–205). And insofar as spiritual cultures and political cultures may reflect and influence one another, we will want to take each into consideration when attending to questions about the other.

I have only, however, just begun to engage the issue of the interaction of civic and ritual sacrificial cultures in Latin America or Eastern Europe themselves. But I have completed some work on this political and religious dynamic among the French "cousins" of the Counter-Reformation spiritualities of Hispano-America and Catholic Eastern Europe.[3] I want to lay out some of this data and conclusions reached in that work about relationships between ritual and civic sacrificial discourses in the French context.

This discussion is partly about attempts to create a discourse on sacrifice by linking, or resisting to link, the ritual and moral senses of sacrifice in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries France. At certain times, in certain societies, certain images and themes seem to dominate intellectual discourse – both academic and moral. In France, the decade or so just before the First World War was such a period; sacrifice was the theme. Sacrifice was what intellectual people talked about, even as they talked with it. At one and the same time it was both subject of discourse and its primary metaphor, at the same time scholarly preoccupation and moral passion.

After exploring the French material, I would then hope that this analysis would strike familiar chords with our colleagues from Eastern Europe and Latin America, and help me to expand the generality of my analysis fruitfully in their direction. This is, of course, no mere hope to find echoes, since Counter-Reformation French teaching about eucharistic sacrifice apparently had significant influence throughout the Catholic world. The first matter of business is to clarify certain conceptual problems attending uses of the term "sacrifice". Then, I shall discuss the French example of how ritual and civic notions of sacrifice

played off each other to create a distinctive culture in France prior to the First World War. But first a few conceptual remarks about "sacrifice".

2. Lost "sacrifice"

The word "sacrifice" is so much a part of our language that we often never "see" it. We know this by inspection when we observe that the same word covers not only what Abraham was about to do to Isaac, what some Christians think happened to Jesus on Calvary, but also altruistic action, valiant selfless death in war, or a spectacular sale at the local department store. The word may have had exclusive and lofty religious meanings in the past, but now it means much more, and as a result, of course, much less to those who value the restricted use of the term in its original religious uses. Yet this should not blind us to the semantic fact that in calling something a "sacrifice", we are investing that something with a meaning – indeed a whole history of meanings – it would not otherwise have had.

In much contemporary scholarship, these meanings tend to revolve round the idea of a death or some violent act. In wartime, it is often heard that the tragic death of a loved one "was not a useless death, but a sacrifice!" Likewise, when the bloodier aspects of a ritual, such as Aztec "sacrifice", come to our attention, we may say to ourselves in trying to understand it: "This is not random and wanton violence, but sacrifice." We imply that the violence indicated is in some way governed by rules, however repellant their logic may be.

Now, clearly these are justifications; they are attempts to invest a death with some meaning it is really thought to have. Whether these justifications are defensible or not is less interesting than the fact that employing the word "sacrifice" itself signals that a sophisticated interpretation of an act has already occurred. Thus, when we meet the word

"sacrifice", we already meet a term freighted with significance. However, this does not stop even further layers of meaning from being heaped upon it, as we will see. What is critical is for us to see, first of all, the first level of meanings of the term "sacrifice". To see this, we will have to make two preliminary distinctions.

3. The two discourses on sacrifice

"Sacrifice" is a word that can mean many things. But two quite different senses of the term have had and continue to have wide currency in Western society. These are "sacrifice" as a *ritual* performance and "sacrifice" as a *moral* act. Ritual sacrifices are "oblations [which] involve the slaughter of a victim" (Smith 1923: 214); sacrificial acts are deeds of moral generosity or so-called "altruism". The first inhabits the realm of ethnography and history of religions, the second the disciplines of moral philosophy and political economy.

Despite this division of usage and intellectual labors, many moral and religious thinkers have insisted on placing ritual and moral sacrifice under a common conceptual rubric. Hubert and Mauss begin their classic study, *Sacrifice: Its nature and functions* by poring over the theory of sacrifice developed by William Robertson Smith; they end with an elegiac appeal for civic sacrifice. For them and other theorists of sacrifice, the term "sacrifice" casts a broad net, drawing on associations across these different contexts. What seemed dual, even equivocal notions, conceal, in their view, a deeper unity, bringing archaic religious practice into fundamental relation with modern moral deed. For example, the two are said to be essentially the same because ritual sacrifice may be said to share an identical "inner" attitude or *intention* with moral sacrifice: both show devotion, willingness to give, or perhaps tendencies to violence to oneself (self-immolation and masochism) or to others (scapegoating, both literally and metaphorically). Or, ritual sacrifice

may be said to be an evolutionary precursor of moral sacrifice: ritual sacrifice provides an *historical* basis for contemporary policies of altruism, in the same way sociobiologists claim primate "social" behavior anticipates and grounds contemporary human association. Or, ritual sacrifice may be said to serve the same social or religious *functions* as moral sacrifice: both consecrate an individual in the eyes of the community, the "victim" of the ritual sacrifice serves the same function as the "hero" or "martyr" in time of war.

Part of the rationale for linking disparate realms of discourse has to do with the rhetoric of justification and persuasion. It is especially difficult to convince people of the need for so-called "sacrificial" courses of action, since "sacrifice" is, on its face, undesirable or worse. This is particularly difficult for those inhabiting a world dominated by individualist values. For them, perhaps the most difficult thing to do is to deny, limit or "sacrifice" their own interests. In these societies, it is hard to see how one can justify the "sacrifice" of self-interest while affirming *at the same time* the prevailing value of individual self-interest. Thus, when we need to convince ourselves and others that certain courses of action are desirable, we seek as much help as possible to make our case.

One way of supporting claims for the need to sacrifice is by resort to analogies. These analogies may be of many kinds. But typically they are drawn either from a contemporary situation or from the past. Thus analogies are declared between "sacrificial" courses of action we desire and cases declared to be "parallels" or "precedents".

In the quest for "parallels" or "precedents", or cases where we seek to persuade ourselves or others of the need for moral sacrifice, we often look back over our shoulders to ritual sacrificial analogies from our own culture which serve as precedents for our own policies. If the ancient Hebrews could offer the first fruits of their harvests to God, why cannot people today show the same devotion by supporting certain "good works"? In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in France, ethnography and the history of religions presented modern people the image of contemporary, so-called "primitive", societies which

apparently knew little of the anomie and internal strife which marked their own societies. Oddly enough, ritual sacrifice was often a key part of their communal lives. Could it be, some Western moralists asked, that the primitive practice of ritual sacrifice had something to teach modern Europeans about successful social life? Could it be that ritual sacrifice and moral sacrifice produced the same effects for the coherence and stability of society? If so, then we might appeal to the parallel case of ritual sacrifice to justify campaigns for intensified moral sacrifice in the nation.[4]

4. The "extent" of sacrifice

The second conceptual problem that shaped theories of sacrifice was the question of the "extent" or degree of giving in the sacrificial act – whether ritual or moral, or both. In the case where everything is given (or seen to be given) in sacrifice, I shall speak of sacrifice as a "giving *up*". In cases where something is held back (or seen to be held back), I shall speak of a "giving *of*". Ritual sacrifices of self-immolation, where victim and sacrificer are identical or where victims freely offer themselves to be sacrificed, are paradigms of ritual sacrifice as "giving up". Nothing is held back in this ritual oblation. In certain Christian theologies, for example, the death of Jesus as the "perfect victim", is seen as such a "giving up". Similarly, in the moral realm, acts of "pure" or "total" altruism are often described as "sacrifices", because a person "gives up" all he owns, or because he gives without reckoning his own interests.

When we speak of ritual sacrifice as "giving *of*", we imagine another scenario. Here the victim and sacrificer are not the same person. This is Moses making burnt offerings in the desert, Abraham readying the altar for Isaac, or the Brahmin priests doing the *asvamedha*. As in sacrifice in the sense of "giving up", the victim is destroyed, but the sacrificer

is spared. Although the victim disappears into the "mouth of sacrifice", so to speak, the sacrificer remains to sacrifice again. A victim is offered in place of the sacrificer. The sacrificer "gives *of*" himself, but does not "give *up*" himself. A certain prudence prevails where earlier there had been none. In terms of moral discourse, the individual and his self-interest is given standing: moral sacrifice as "giving of" does not require self-effacement; it only requires significant giving of what may be precious to an individual. On this view, for example, soldiers in wartime are not required, under ordinary circumstances, to run upon enemy bayonets in suicidal infantry charges; it is enough that they do everything short of "dying to the last man"; the lives of troops are "held back" from death. Surrender under circumstances of overwhelming odds is not dishonorable, because the individual lives of soldiers count as moral goods. They have "sacrificed" enough in "giving of" themselves as far as they have.

The key notion distinguishing these two degrees of sacrifice is that self-interest is accorded rights in the case of sacrifice as "giving of". There are, for example, instances of sacrifice as "giving up", which can become cases of "giving of". One would need to make the case that some holding back or self-interest could be detected. In the case of a ritual self-immolation, self-interest seems ruled out. Yet, if we adopt a certain Christian theological viewpoint of an "imperfect humanity", with interests in the nonetheless willing self-immolation of our "perfect victim", Jesus's "giving up" becomes a "giving of". Humanity "gives of" itself (since Jesus is human) and offers Jesus to the Father as a perfect victim. At the same time, humanity admits it cannot or will not "give up" itself, since Jesus is offered in its place. Aside from the Christian theological view of Jesus' being considered a "perfect victim" because of his divinity, humanity may also be seen as holding back from making a total sacrifice of itself by guarding its own self-interest from the uncompromising rigors of sacrificial death.

Likewise in cases of so-called moral altruism, unless a person gives their life, something is always held back. Thus, they "give of" themselves, without "giving up" themselves. Or, to adopt the somewhat

cynical attitude of our own society, people tend to be skeptical of claims made by others that they have acted out of pure altruism. Skeptics are always ready with the comment that the putative altruist acted out of some remote perception of self-interest – that although they may have "given of" their wealth, time, energy and so on, the putative altruist actually did so out of some kind of self-interest in psychological or social satisfaction (Mauss 1967).

Let me now turn to a French tradition which will bring these distinctions to life. I do not choose this example arbitrarily; rather, it is in several senses privileged. First, I am prepared to argue that this tradition articulates a view of sacrifice in relation to which we can understand most theories of sacrifice from Durkheim to René Girard – either as a rejection or further amplification. Second, as far as I have been able to tell, the case I will lay out has been the most influential (and certainly most exaggerated) view of the nature of sacrifice developed in the West. This view of sacrifice is articulated within the context of theological claims about the nature of the eucharist. And since the nature of the eucharist was one of the chief items defining Protestant over against Catholic, such discussions about sacrifice as occurred there could hardly be more important for understanding the religious dynamic of the West. Third, given the importance of Catholic counterreformation theology and spirituality in the formation of the religious and political mentality of Latin America and much of Eastern Europe, this theology of sacrifice has clear bearing for the central concerns of this volume.

5. Sacrificing the individual: "The French School" and oratory

In the heat of the Catholic reaction to the reformation, new emphasis and interpretation were given to the sacrificial character of the eucharist by the a theological movement called, "*école française de spiritualité*". One

of the theologians responsible for the extreme view of sacrifice was a leading *dévot* of his time, Pierre (later to be Cardinal) de Bérulle (1575–1629) (Bremond 1921). Bérulle was the creator of an influential "mystical" spirituality centered around the priestly figure of Jesus (Bremond 1921: 17–33). He mediated this influence as founder of the French version of one of the most influential institutions of the French "*réaction*" to the Reformation, the Oratorian congregation (1611). Through the Oratory, Bérulle sought to renew Catholic education by revamping the ideology and training of priests and laity alike. But for our purposes, it is Bérulle's place as the creator of a powerfully influential spirituality that demands our attention. In the tradition of François de Sales, Ignatius Loyola, and the Spanish mystics, he was also a major figure in developing a spirituality designed to counter the innovations of the Reformation (Treasure 1972: 13). More than just a theological figure, Bérulle was directly instrumental in bringing the Carmelites to France. He stressed the ideal of a passionate "adherence to Christ", and a Christ, moreover, graphically displayed in concrete images and figures, such as the blood-besotted sacred heart. Of him it is said that "the Church of seventeenth-century France was above all Bérulle's Church" (Treasure 1972: 111).

The political dimension of these religious ideas was often well appreciated by these theologians. One of the leaders of the Oratorian movement and its one time general, Charles de Condren (1588–1641), observed that the Council of Trent "had been above all a political assembly".[5] In practical terms, Bérulle was for many years closely associated with Cardinal Richelieu in the royal government of Louis XIII (Treasure 1972: 13–18, 223–224); he was cousin to Marie de Médicis (Bremond 1921: 254). Although we are uncertain of his political ambitions, Bérulle had apparently been considered by Richelieu as a potential successor, if not rival (Bremond 1921: 16). More than this, Richelieu promoted the cause of Bérulle's *dévot* spirituality, perhaps because it stood for "a process of active and at the same time self-eliminating exposure of the soul to the object of its adoration" (Treasure 1972: 111; Allier 1902) – just the thing to train future subjects of

absolute monarchy in the school of submission. Yet, however, a man of the world like Richelieu he may have been, Bérulle seemed to exceed him by far in severity: while Richelieu at least wished to tolerate Protestants in France for reasons of state and expedience, Bérulle wished to proscribe Protestantism (Treasure 1972: 105, 223). De Condren's severe spirituality also seemed to be "of a piece" with the character of his wider life – in this case, his rearing and education. Indeed, the connections between the child and the man are so obvious as to offer one of the better examples of the pertinence of contemporary feminist criticism of religion. Consider the bizarre details of the biographical sketch by Denis Amelote (1609–1679), a contemporary and devoted follower of De Condren. Pére Amelote tells us that young Charles' military father raised him as a soldier from infancy, inflicting upon him a "virile, military and somewhat savage education" (Bremond 1921: 256). As soon as Charles had been weaned, his father refused to allow him to be held or carried about by women. Only soldiers were permitted to touch the young man; his days were filled with drilling and military exercises. Later as a youth, he "spontaneously" resisted any contact with women. Having been forced to attend a ball, he went into a fever for eight consecutive days. Once a great beauty of the day warmly embraced him, kissing him dearly. Condren's reaction was horror: "the more she kissed him, the more he rubbed his cheeks." He ran off in a fury of rage. Fiddle music made him ill. But he loved the sound of the drum – not for its beauty, but because it was more heroic. Beauty, too, repelled him – even his own. Although a handsome young man, he so detested beauty that he destroyed an especially flattering portrait of himself by shooting it full-face with arrows (Bremond 1921: 256). On all these incidents, his Oratorian companion offered such comments as "Am I not right in saying that this blessed child from tender years partook of the fulness of Jesus Christ?" (Bremond 1921: 257). Later, after his ordination, his turn to spiritual writing and teaching continued this violent and self-hating trend of mind. In a collection of his maxims we find Condren saying: "I am a greater temptation to myself and injure myself more than the devil or the world can do; therefore I must

hate myself more" (Bremond 1921: 270). As we will see, Condren's annihilationist theology of sacrifice and eucharist, joined with Bérulle's, echoed these early features of his personal spiritual inclinations. Some even say that Condren was "as Bérullian as Bérulle himself, and had been so long before meeting Bérulle" (Bremond 1921: 294).

Bérulle's spiritual severity was continued by his successors, who became known as the "*école française de spiritualité*", or simply "the French School" (Walsh 1949). The message of the French School was one of reform, and was preached by the Oratorian fathers such as Charles de Condren and Olier (Galy 1951). By some standards, the key member of this movement was Olier. Among Olier's accomplishments was the foundation of what would become the vanguard seminary of France, Saint-Sulpice.[6] In the seventeenth century, the Saint-Sulpicians were responsible for reforming the secular French clergy according to the decrees of the Council of Trent by creating an ideology of priestly holiness inspired by the theology of sacrifice of the French School (Walsh 1949: xi). By joining the dual roles of theologian and administrator, Olier was thus positioned to establish a close connection between Saint-Sulpice as the preeminent institution for the education and training of the French clergy and for the French School's theological vision of the priesthood. As part of his dedication to the *Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement*, Olier also led public campaigns against the sale and display of so-called pornographic "tableaux" and sculptures in the open-air market fairs held in Saint Germain des Prés. During the regency, Olier's campaigns were sponsored by the queen mother (Allier 1902: 119). And, under his instigation the Company acted as a "secret committee of public morality" which "attacked all manner of evil at any and all times" (Allier 1902: 117). Even though those touched by Saint Sulpician ideas, like Ernest Renan and Alfred Loisy, departed in many ways from the theological straight and narrow, the orthodox lessons taught about the meaning of sacrifice by the Oratorians survived even within their deviant Catholic thought. Renan argued that the only way France could recover from its defeat to the Prussians was to adopt the spirit of sacrifice for the nation, even if this meant submitting to the discipline

of a monarchic regime (Renan 1968: 45). Moreover, while dominating the education of secular French clergy for centuries, their influence was not confined to France alone. It spread far beyond, and came in time to dominate "réaction" thinking about the nature of the priestly function among Roman Catholics of many nations. For example, not only did the Saint Sulpicians found the first seminary in the United States, but "for a long time, the formation and training of the secular clergy in the whole United States" was in their hands (Walsh 1949: xi). Even more influential upon the Catholicism of North America was Olier's missionary projects. He personally founded the Seminaire de Saint-Sulpice in Montreal in 1657, only 16 years after the foundation of the motherhouse in Paris.

Nothing is more central to the thought of the "*école française*" than devotion to the eucharist, understood as a kind of sacramental representation of sacrifice. In fact, membership in the leadership of the Oratory overlapped with the inner circle of one of the most influential secret societies of "dévots", during the period of the "*réaction*", the Company of the Most Blessed Sacrament (Allier 1902, 1909, 1914). For instance, Bérulle, De Condren, and Olier were all members of the Company. Taking their lead from the teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the figure of Jesus as sacrificial priest dominated their thinking. De Condren, asserted that sacrifice is the first and foremost religious act and priestly function (Galy 1951: 131). With the image in mind of Christ the heavenly priest continually offering sacrifice to the Father throughout eternity, Olier saw Christ's sacrifice as eternal.

> It cannot be doubted that there is sacrifice in heaven, because heaven is most of all the place of perfect religion ... By right, sacrifice should be offered there, and offered there unceasingly, because it is there that religion suffers no interruption.[7]

The idea of Christ's eternal sacrifice informed Olier's view of a reformed clergy: Christ's sacrifice was not only eternal itself, but eternally exemplary for the secular Roman priesthood, and by extension to the faithful themselves. Thus, the core of this new spirituality consisted of

seeing the whole of life as a living sacrifice. For the "French School", sacrifice consisted in an offering, its immolation and final "consummation" or acceptance by God (Walsh 1949: 56).[8] A twentieth-century French encyclopedia of Catholicism even reemphasizes Condren's annihilationism and antihumanism. There Condren's theory of sacrifice stands for the "miserable sinfulness of the creature" and the necessity of the utter "annihilation" of those confessed of moral misery (*Catholicisme* 2: 1483). Similarly, Jean Galy, a mid-twentieth-century French commentator on the French school says that Condren's theory of sacrifice "requires destruction ..., [a] total destruction ..., as much as is completely possible" (Galy 1951: 145). Accordingly, when the individual considers the prospect of self-sacrifice, it is annihilation of the individual self that one should expect. As Olier, puts it.

> Thus it is that Our Lord is the priest of His holy sacrifice, in which he offers Himself *and His Church as a holocaust to God in the odor of sweetness. He Himself is the priest and victim ... The altar of sacrifice is the substance of the Word, Who maintains Jesus Christ in his holy humanity, and who beholds that humanity forever burning and consumed* in the person of the Word as on an altar, to the glory of God.[9]

6. Eucharistic politics: La Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement

The association of political and religious ideas by the French School imply that more than intellectual issues of sacramental theology were at stake for French Catholics and Protestants. Bound up with sacrament and theology are matters of fundamental anthropology — of a culture, and thus a plan of human society (Bossy 1983; McGinness 1988). Historian Frederick McGinness confirms this, arguing for the key "role of the eucharist in reorganizing Catholic society and molding its saints of the post-Tridentine era" (McGinness 1988: 99), and the concomitant

conviction that the "reform of society depended on the eucharist" (McGinness 1988: 105). Theological debates about eucharistic sacrifice were embedded in the actual practice of collective religious life, in a plan of what human life was supposed to be.

Part of the identity of French Protestant religion was, after all, formed in opposition to the politics of such crises as the Catholic reaction to the Reformation (the "*réaction*") and the revocation of the Edict of Nantes (the "*révocation*"), which followed in its wake. All such political and social matters impinged directly on ritual life: where, if at all, could the community gather for worship? What was one free to do if one were able to assemble? Further, the communal identity of French Protestants derived in part from their conception of how their view and practice of the eucharist stood them in stark opposition to both the Catholic "*réaction*" and to the way of religious life for which it stood. Concluding a discussion of early French Protestant ideas about the eucharist, historian Marcel Royannez says:

> Nothing shows better the opposition between reformation faith and Roman belief in this period than the decision taken by legal authorities to raze the homes where [Protestant] communions had been celebrated, and to erect on the very same spot a [Roman Catholic] chapel to the Blessed Sacrament. What did these earthly measures and idolatrous things matter to a reformed [Christian]. He met God everywhere that he heard his Word, and knew that Christ communicated with him in heaven (1979: 576).

Royannez is making oblique reference to an organization to which we have referred several times in connection with the Oratorians, the *Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement*. The *Compagnie* was a social body organized, in part, around an ideology of the reinvigorated sacrificial eucharist. Its duties were expressly to act as a benevolent society, but also to propagate the Catholic faith during the height of the *réaction* to the reformation. In its role as a charity, the company founded hospitals, protected tradesmens' organizations, provided legal aid to societies for the poor, and distributed alms to the needy. But in its role as an agent

of the *réaction*, critics of the *Compagnie*, like Protestant historian, Raoul Allier, refer to it using the notorious name, "*Cabale des Dévots*". Allier does so because he felt that the public image of the *Compagnie* hid a grotesque interior of militant anti-Protestantism, broad religious repression, violence and cruelty. To Protestants and other religious dissenters certainly, the *Compagnie* was no better than a secret police, seeking to regulate religious and moral life. Although the *Compagnie* never officially or publicly sought the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, it seems to have worked secretly to undermine it or erode its protections. They influenced judges to interpret the Edict in a way which would limit any concessions to Protestants. They campaigned among the Parliament to oppose any possible Protestant infringements (Goyau 1908: 184). Some scholars have argued that it was the constant pressure such as the *Compagnie* brought to bear over the years that finally provoked the crisis which eventuated in the *révocation* in 1685 (Goyau 1908: 185).[10] Added to this, the *Compagnie* cooperated in Louis XIII's revival of punishment by "mutilations", such as cutting off the lips of public blasphemers (Allier 1902: 215).

Thus, the significance of the *Compagnie* is that its social character conforms well with its theological pedigree. Its anti-individualist social authoritarianism fits well enough with a sacrificial eucharistic theology of annihilation: in both cases, the individual is unprotected from an unlimited degree of civic sacrifice. Thus, the *Compagnie*, the eucharistic theology it represents, and the attendant sacrificial ideology of the reactionary Catholics form a set of symbolic equivalences, a kinship of spirituality between the *Compagnie* and the Oratorian theorists of the eucharist sacrifice we considered earlier. From our survey of reactionary Roman Catholic theories of sacrifice, as articulated in theologies of the eucharist, I suggest that these annihilationist theologies of eucharistic sacrifice ought to be seen as theological counterparts to theories of political absolutism reigning in the France of that notable new *dévot*, Louis XIV. I also argue that as the *révocation* and its political consequences cannot be separated from the new annihilationist theologies of eucharist and sacrifice of the same period, so reformation notions of

the sacredness of the individual cannot be separated from the new antisacrificial theologies being created by reformers. Each side armed itself with an array of potent symbols capable of speaking either the language of politics or religion, or both! What Allier's indictment of the *Compagnie* argued throughout was a clear reformation case in favor of the sacredness of the individual, and thus his resistance to the sacrifice of individuals to any power whatsoever. In their turn, Protestants could reaffirm the wisdom of their antisacrificial theology of eucharist by pointing out its political consequences in such social formations as the *Compagnie*.

7. The legacy of Joseph De Maistre

Another source of the peculiarly severe view of sacrifice prevailing among reactionary Catholic French forces is Joseph De Maistre (1753–1821). Although he might have been in a position to know about the thinkers of the French School, Maistre nowhere quotes them in his two chief writings on sacrifice, Book X of *Les soirées de Saint-Petersbourg* (1809) and *Eclaircissements sur les sacrifices* (1810) (Maistre 1822; Lowrie 1974: 17–24). This is not necessarily surprising since the work of the French School was directed at the formation of the clergy. But with the clergy decimated by the revolution, and its theological resources depleted, layfolk like Maistre articulated their own new vision of the future shape of the Catholic Europe of counterrevolution and reaction.

Active in making propaganda for the monarchy and papacy in early nineteenth-century France, Maistre struck responsive chords among nationalistic French Catholics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He inspired elements of the Catholic revival, and its new religiously informed nationalism, and later their backlash against a triumphant Dreyfusard movement. Thus reactionary Catholic theologians in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century saw in Maistre

a precursor (see for instance, Goyau 1921; Bourquerel 1912: 18; Berlin 1990). Like our Oratorian members of the "French School" and "*Compagnie*", Maistre's opposition to liberal individualism also celebrates sacrifice – in his case in both the ritual and civic senses. As to ritual sacrifice, he asserted that in their different ways, all human cultures believed in a kind of universal guilt and in the need for ceremonies of sacrifice to repair the broken relation between humanity and divinity by means of an expiatory death.

Notable in Maistre's view of sacrifice, and at the same time aligning him with the Oratorians are the victimization and scapegoat motifs (Girard 1977). Not only does he hold that actual killing and shedding of blood are essential to socially redeeming sacrifice, but also that the guilty can only be redeemed by the sacrificial death of a victimized "innocent". Maistre considered the execution of Louis XVI, for example, a literal ritual "sacrifice" expiating the evils of the revolution. For him, its example becomes the basis of a general principle of the political and religious realms. Says Maistre:

> One especially finds that all nations agree on the marvellous efficacy of the voluntary sacrifice of the innocent who sacrifices himself to the divinity as a propitiatory victim. Men have always attached an infinite price to the submission of the just person who accepts these sufferings (1822b: 456).

In the same vein, Maistre applauds "the most favorable changes" in nations which "are brought about almost always by the bloody catastrophes in which an innocent is a victim" (1822b: 457).[11] In political terms, this means no less than submission of the individual to the will of the monarch or state, – in religious terms, absolute submission to the magisterial will of the church.[12] Like the Oratorians in the seventeenth century, Abbé Bouquerel in 1912 advises us that God is good, and we are not. We sinners need to "appease" God and "expiate" our crimes. Acknowledging Maistre, Bouquerel repeats the very words of his nineteenth-century master: "Man recognizes his culpability, offers a life to repair the outrage he has committed" (Bouquerel 1912: 3).

8. National and individual sacrifice in the "Great War"

Another popular venue for Maistre's doctrines of sacrifice at the turn of the century was wartime writing. The Roman clergy were especially active interpreting the War as "expiation (Fontana 1973: 75). France had been guilty of "egoism", greed and "forgetfulness of God" (Fontana 1973: 81–82), and needed to "sacrifice" – and thus to endure real physical suffering and death in order to repair the breach between man and God. Late nineteenth-century religious enthusiasms such as pilgrimage to the little Calvary of La Salette or devotion to the Sacred Heart rehearse these themes of expiation through suffering, modeled upon Jesus's death on the cross (Griffiths 1966; Rémond 1969: 185–188).

The civic piety of those days echoes similar themes. In a collection of correspondence and personal tributes to a victim of the First War, Capitaine Pierre de Saint-Jouan, we hear replayed Oratorian and Maistrean themes with uncanny precision (Grandmaison 1920). Christ's priestly sacrificial death and nationalism are part of the same thing:

> the consolations of patriotism make a name illustrious at the same time as it saves the nation's independence. This is the whole of the sanctifying and generous doctrine of the immolation, which is at once the ground of the world's law and the foundation of our beliefs, since the time of the sacrifice on Calvary – which has itself conquered death by death (Grandmaison 1920: 267).

These are even linked directly across the decades to the ideology of sacrifice articulated by Joseph de Maistre:

> However, in the veins of Saint-Jouan flows blood too French not to relish the honor of sacrifice, too Christian not to understand the value, the beauty of heroic duty and to adore the paternal hand of God even when it chooses to strike. They do not doubt for an instant that death in combat only carries great privileges,

> and along with Joseph de Maistre they believe that "the victims of this dreadful judgment have not shed their blood in vain" (Grandmaison 1920: 266).

These sacrificial themes from the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries thus persisted in France, and indeed, were reinvigorated during the nationalist revival before and during the Great War (Despland 1983). In the early part of this century, the ideal of vicarious suffering as self-sacrifice "assumed an importance out of all proportion to the other doctrines of the Church ... God so arranges the world that the sins may be balanced by expiatory sacrifices" (Griffiths 1966: 157). What is truly remarkable, however, was the prolongation and "ubiquity" (Griffiths 1966: 149), of these beliefs even into our own times, and how thoroughly this belief dominated religious sensibility in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries France. It emerged in surprising places, such as in French literature where it was the most popular theme of Catholic writers of several different generations such as Bernanos, Huysmans and Bloy (Griffiths 1966: 156; Lowrie 1974). To touch base for a moment with Latin America, in particular Mexico, this spirituality informs several of the novels of Graham Greene, notably his literary comment on the "Guerra de los Cristeros", mentioned at the outset. This novel is, of course, Greene's tale of the fugitive priest who in the end embraces his own sacrificial death in *The power and the glory*. Likewise at the opposite end of the political spectrum, the anarchists formulated a mythology of the "expiatory" sacrificial death of the activist (Sonn 1989: 287–288). Often likening the judicial executions of their agents with that of Jesus' death at the hands of Pilate, the anarchists calculated that trading upon these deeply entrenched images would handsomely serve the interests of their political program (Sonn 1989: 289). A commentator on the then (1912) current scene of socialist agitation argued that anarchist radical socialism and Roman Catholicism really served the same moralities: they required "certain immolations, efforts, sacrifices on the part of society's members ... [certain loyalties to the] transcendent, immutable, absolutist" (Goyau 1912: 65–66).

9. Sacrifice and culture: understanding the Americas

Some ten years ago, Octavio Paz wrote a stimulating piece for the *New Yorker*, entitled "Mexico and the United States". There Paz argued that the two nations will never understand each other unless they understand what I have called "culture":

> the realm of civilization, that fluid zone of imprecise contours in which are fused and confused ideas and beliefs, institutions and technologies, styles and morals, fashions and churches, the material culture and that evasive reality we rather inaccurately call *le génie des peuples* (1979: 358).

It is in this realm of culture that US Americans and Mexican Americans stand opposed to one another, Paz argues. I take a program of probing to the depths of these cultural differences to be implied in Paz's analysis. It is by getting to the bedrock logics of our different cultures that we will learn to comprehend the motives and actions of one another, either to agree to disagree or to bridge the civilizational gap separating us. It is Paz's view — and one which the line of argument of this paper favors — that the fundamental cultural logics of the US and Mexican Americans rest in large part on a religious basis (Paz 1979: 360), namely upon the differences inherent in the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation.[13]

What has this to do with sacrifice, eucharistic theology, seventeenth-century French spirituality, Joseph De Maistre, and the French Catholic revival of right wing political and religious cultures? The answer is simply that in these matters much of the counterreformation Catholic world shares elements of a common religious culture, as grasped in the spirituality of sacrifice I have sketched out. Although differences are to be found between the French and Hispanic worlds in this respect, perhaps more to the point are the similarities. These similarities have gone some way in making up the cultural distinctiveness of a nation such as Mexico. Many of these cultural traits, shared with counterref-

ormation France, put Latin America at opposite ends of the cultural spectrum occupied by the predominantly Anglo-Saxon and Protestant nations of northern Europe, North America, and the South Seas. History has dealt us this hand; how we go on to play it, is up to us.

Notes

1. An articulate programmatic discussion of spirituality as object of study can be found in Le Brun 1971.
2. Here one might refer to the place of Poland's King Stanislas Leszczynski (1677—1766) and devotion to the Sacred Heart (Boyé 1921).
3. Leszczynski, also Duke of Lorraine, was in this respect directly related to currents of French thought; Cardinal Bérulle, about whom we will have more to say directly, was responsible for introducing the Carmelite order into France in the 17th century. See respectively, Levron 1984 and Buckley 1989: 44.
4. Typical of the intellectual troubles which confusion of these two semantic domains caused thinkers of Durkheim's day were these words of the Roman Catholic modernist, Alfred Loisy:

   > It may be thought finally that the moral idea underlying sacrifice ought finally to eliminate the reality; but the logic of facts brought about the consummation rather than the logic of ideas, and it is not strictly true to say that the moral idea replaced the reality. Also it is playing a little on the double sense of the word 'sacrifice' to speak in this connection of the law which demands that progress shall be bought for humanity by the suffering and often by the death of those who contribute to advancement most effectively. Between the man who dies, the victim of his destiny, or rather of the resistance opposed by the force of inertia to the force of progress, and the lamb, the goat, or even the human being immolated to a Divinity to win His favour, there is only the analogy that explains the use of the same word, but should not be able to deceive the historian (Loisy 1976: 128).

5. Saint-Beuve quoting de Condren in *Port-Royal* 1. I, 315, cited in Allier 1902: 164.
6. Renan said he was "repelled" by the seminary and its violence against "personal individuality" (Chadbourne 1968: 26).
7. Walsh 1949: 21, citing Olier, "Preface," *Grand Messe*, cols. 287–288.
8. As we have seen, critics will disagree as to which moment in the sacrifice is essential. One twentieth-century commentator, the Reverend Eugene Walsh, admits that other Roman Catholic theologians have disagreed as to which moment in sacrifice was most important for the seventeenth-century founders of the French School. According to Walsh, these critics have erroneously placed too much emphasis on "immolation" and annihilation of the self in sacrifice. This commentator, an American writing in 1949, seems to want to interpret the French School along lines more palatable to the individualist and humanist temper of American sensibilities. He asserts that the sweeter reconciliation of creature and creator at the culminating moment of the "consummation" of sacrifice is more important than the rather chilling annihilation of self in sacrifice (1949: 56, 58, 59, 109). For him, it is not the "slaying," denial or submission of individuality that really makes the true sacrifice, but rather humanity's inner spiritual transformation and return to God (1949: 41, 59). We must record, however, that this modern reading of the seventeenth-century priorities does not agree with other equally modern readings. Nor does it unproblematically accord with the words of the Oratorians. For although one may grant the view that consummation and reconciliation with the divinity remain central to Oratorian theology of sacrifice, annihilation of self remains necessary nonetheless.
9. Walsh 1949: 21, citing Olier, "Preface," *Grand' Messe*, cols. 287–288 (my emphasis).
10. On the activities of the *Compagnie*, Allier says:

> One thing is certain. The *Compagnie du Saint- Sacrement* had developed its sacred espionage in tandem with its organization of charitable works. The distribution of alms served to make the souls of the wretched more receptive to Catholic preaching; suffering would have tended to put them off. But the Compagnie did not only afford a way of indoctrinating the poor with catechism using the lure of a piece of bread, they made it possible to invade the lives of the needy — to ferret out all their secrets, to learn about the skeletons in their

> closets, to track all their bad thoughts. Thus, the Cabal developed spiritual police operations ... The official administration organized professionals who merely sought to make a living in this occupation. The *Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement* had fanatical agents, among whom, doubtless, were some who gave birth to and enhanced the love of art, but who, above all, loved souls ferociously, and in their zeal to save them were utterly unscrupulous about the methods they employed. Sanctified by the purity of their intentions, [they committed] what their simple consciences would have otherwise called dirty tricks (Allier 1902: 108–109).

11. This is one of the points where Girard picks up on Joseph De Maistre (Girard 1977: 4).
12. Abbé Bouquerel, writing on sacrifice in 1912 as part of the "economy of religions," rehearses the dour antihumanist and authoritarian themes of the centuries before (1912: 18 and *passim* for citations to Maistre).
13. Paz believes these different "religious attitudes" are "irreconcilable" (Paz 1979: 369).

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Theoretical and methodological implications

Armin W. Geertz

Theories on tradition and change in sociology, anthropology, history, and the history of religions

The approach I wish to pursue in this brief introduction to theories on tradition and change in the history of religions and cognate disciplines is to summarize the issues rather than to delve into the details of each discipline. Such details can be found in my recent work on the subject.[1]

I borrow sociologist Edward Shils' definition of tradition as the recurrence of structures of conduct and patterns of belief over extended periods of time in single societies, corporate bodies, or culturally common societies (1971: 123). But this is purely a working definition, and it is one that involves certain assumptions which can be questioned in the pursuit of a theory of tradition.

In his 1990 publication *Tradition as truth and communication*, the French anthropologist Pascal Boyer of King's College in Cambridge provocatively wrote that a theory of tradition is lacking in social anthropology. We can also add that the same can be said for the other disciplines. He noted that:

> diverse institutions are lumped together under the label "traditional", mainly on the basis of their resemblance to certain prototypical cases. There is no *a priori* reason to think that the institutions thus labelled have any scientifically relevant properties in common, in the same way as there is no reason to think that the ordinary distinction of trees and shrubs is relevant to biology (1990: viii).

One of Boyer's basic arguments is that there can be "no theory of what happens in cultural interaction without some strong hypotheses about

what is happening in the actors' minds. So we should try to make these hypotheses explicit" (1990: viii). Thus Boyer identified three features of "traditional" cultural phenomena: "(i) they are *instances of social interaction*; (ii) they are *repeated*; (iii) they are *psychologically salient*" (1990: 1). By the first point, Boyer means actual events — not their explanations; by the second, he is referring to a criterion of recognition, not a theoretical claim (such as the hypothesis that a particular cultural *model* is conserved through repetition of a social event); and by the third, Boyer means the "attention-demanding" aspects of these institutions (1990: 2).

Boyer systematically criticized the implicit assumptions anthropologists have about traditional actions and utterances. He questioned specifically the idea that repetition implies cohesiveness and the idea that some groups or societies — termed "traditionalistic" — are resistive to change. Anthropologists frequently substitute "conservation for repetition and models for actions" because they carry the implicit causal hypothesis that "cultural models cause actual behavior, and their conservation causes traditional repetition" (1990: 10). But this hypothesis, which is not even viewed as a hypothesis but is more or less taken for granted as a fact, is not self-evident. Boyer claims that this hypothesis does not fit the data very neatly, and it implies "some strong claims about the way people's minds work when processing traditional actions and utterances" (1990: 10). Furthermore, it disregards other important features of traditional practice such as its seeming invulnerability to justification or rationalization, its repetitive literalism, and its focus on exemplificatory events rather than generalizing commentary. These features indicate that there is a major gap between conceptions and theories, on the one hand, and the way tradition is acted out, on the other. By assuming the hypothesis that these conceptions are implicit or unconscious, we are left with having to explain how and why people are conservative about things they are not aware of (1990: 12). Boyer argues that the opposite hypothesis fits the facts better, namely, that people are more conservative about "surface properties" than about possible "deep properties". This does not mean that the hypothesis

rejects conceptions or worldviews, but just that they are not the *cause* of traditional repetition (1990: 14). In fact, it is more plausible that worldviews can be seen as the consequence of shared practice. But Boyer wishes to move beyond both "conservatism hypotheses" as causal explanations of traditional repetition (1990: 15). Literalism is simply not the same as conservatism.

By viewing tradition as a type of interaction "which results in the repetition of certain communicative events" (1990: 23), Boyer promotes the hypothesis that repetition is an automatic process, and it is contingent on the selective capacities of the human mind. In other words, traditional myth consists of "particularly memorable stories" and traditional ritual consists of "particularly memorable sequences of gestures and actions" (1990: 19). This hypothesis implies a view of the human mind as a filter, a view amply supported by studies in experimental psychology. Boyer focused, therefore, on why some situations are psychologically salient, how they are interpreted by various participants, and how memorization contributes to reiteration or repetition. He argued that the mechanisms which contribute to the "cognitive salience of certain communicative events" are "concept acquisition, the naturalization of positions and the causal criteria of truth" (1990: 120).

1. Methodological assumptions

Other scholars have approached the problem of tradition and change by questioning methodological assumptions, by questioning, in other words, whether the methods employed produce categories in themselves which have little to do with the actual problem.

For instance, the British sociologist Anthony Giddens questioned the assumptions of functionalist and structuralist conceptions of structure and system in an attempt to move sociology away from the assumptions of nineteenth-century social thought towards a theory of

structuration. This theory attempts to incorporate a notion of agency (lacking in British and American action theory) and a notion of temporality (which is repressed in both functionalist and structuralist conceptions of structure and system) into social theory (1979: 2–3).

A leading theorem of the theory of structuration is that "every social actor knows a great deal about the conditions of reproduction of the society of which he or she is a member" (1979: 5). His interest lay in the social praxis of subjects whose knowledge is conceived of in a stratification model of personality organized in terms of three sets of relations: the unconscious, practical consciousness, and discursive consciousness (1979: 2, 5). According to Giddens, tradition and routinization in social life are of essential importance in analyzing the conditions of social reproduction and, therefore, this fact must be grasped conceptually rather than repudiating it (1979: 7).

Two political scientists from the University of Chicago, Lloyd Rudolph and Susanne Rudolph, also challenged methodological assumptions in their 1967 study of political development in India. Rudolph and Rudolph raised the important point that much of the misunderstanding of tradition and modernity arose from too little knowledge of and sensibility toward non-Western nations. Comparative politics and political sociology have unavoidably based their analyses on Western empirical evidence and theory — a kind of "imperialism of categories and historical possibilities" — where the "myths and realities of Western experience set limits to the social scientific imagination, and modernity becomes what we imagine ourselves to be" (1967: 7). But they also criticized the lack of interest in comparative theory, which historical particularism evinces in area studies, and consider it to be as problematic as the systematic schemes of non-contextual data in social science studies.

In paying attention to the variations and potentialities of tradition, Rudolph and Rudolph not only gained insight into the dialectical and continuous relationship between modernity and tradition, but also into the meaning of modernity. Rudolph and Rudolph questioned the common assumption that "certain levels of industrialization, urbanization,

literacy, mass communications, and so on ... must be realized before modern behavior and structures in the economic, social, and political realms can be independently and effectively established" (1967: 12). There is no reason to assume causal relationships between these factors.

This relativization of Western methodology is one of the important points raised by historian of religions Michael Pye. In several publications, Pye has argued that scholars in eighteenth-century Japan, especially Tominaga Nakamoto, had also developed an autonomous, Asian cultural relativism and other related ideas with striking parallels to Enlightenment Europe (see Pye 1973, 1983, and his "Introduction" to Tominaga 1990). Pye argued that one can find "the same freely ranging critique of received traditions, the same searching historical investigation of their origins, the same attempt to perceive general laws of religious development" (Tominaga 1990: 47). After explaining which factors have contributed to the Asian intellectual development, Pye concluded that the major implication is that it "is no longer possible to argue that the main characteristics of the modern European rationality presumed to have surfaced during the period of the Enlightenment are themselves so culture-bound that they are of limited application only" (Tominaga 1990: 46). Another historian of religions, Robert F. Campany at Indiana University, has recently shown similar parallels in early medieval China (1990).

Other critics of the methodological assumptions of historical study are non-Western historians who have particularly criticized the essentialisms of orientalist historiographers (Cf. Magubane 1971; Said 1978; Kopf 1986; Asad 1987; O'Hanlon 1988; Mudimbe 1988; Prakash 1990; El-Affendi 1991). Many of their criticisms are directed towards assumptions which I will take up below, as well as to the problem of the construction of the "Exotic".[2] What is important to stress here is that awareness of the sins of the past must be used to improve the methods of the present and not to promote the ultimate deconstruction of cultural science. I concur with historians of religions E. Thomas Lawson and Robert N. McCauley in their statement that many anthropologists have

used post-modern ethnography to throw "the scientific baby out with the colonialist bath water" (Lawson-McCauley, forthcoming).

"History" was for most of the practitioners of the historical sciences a pursuit practiced by historians. In other words, history is not so much a problem as it is an academic narrative technique (Cf. White 1973: 2; Faber 1971; Canary-Kozicki 1978; Rabb-Rothberg 1982; Dray 1985; Stanford 1986: 4). And this technique consciously or unconsciously assumes a deterministic, evolutionary explanatory model. In fact, the very self-identity of history as a scientific method is inextricably embedded in what I would call the tradition/modernity paradigm, i. e., the idea that the Enlightenment "break" with tradition first made history as a science possible (Cf. Plumb 1969: 12—13; Huppert 1970; Kelley 1970).

Recent studies, however, have realigned the historical sciences in tune with methodological debates in cognate disciplines. Perhaps one of the most important insights is the realization that the study of history is often done as a political activity. Whether in Third World nations (Denoon-Kuper 1970) or in our own (Stanford 1986: 3), history is neither just event nor study, it is also political justification. Secondly, the activity of historical study is always a reconstruction directed implicitly or explicitly by contemporary goals (Stanford 1986: 88—113) and, often enough, by tropological strategies (White 1973: 429). These and other insights came to the fore during the early 1970s when, in Georg G. Iggers words, "historians had largely abandoned historicist conceptions of historical study, with their emphasis on narrative and event, in search of a 'historical social science' concerned with structures and social forces" (1975: 175).

One scholar should be mentioned here who, although an anthropologist, has attempted to write a history of the world without the use of the essentialisms characteristic of Western historiographers. In his book *Europe and the people without history*, Eric R. Wolf rejected the typical "tale of unfolding moral purpose" in which national and cultural entities are schematically set off against one another and emphasized instead that history is "the contested outcome of many contradictory

relationships" (1982: 4). Two particular essentialisms that Wolf criticized are the concepts "society" and "culture". By applying a processual approach to "society", Wolf finds "societies" as:

> changing alignments of social groups, segments, and classes, without either fixed boundaries or stable internal constitutions ... Therefore, instead of assuming transgenerational continuity, institutional stability, and normative consensus, we must treat these as problematic. We need to understand such characteristics historically, to note the conditions for their emergence, maintenance, and abrogation (1982: 387).

Likewise with "culture":

> In the rough-and-tumble of social interaction, groups are known to exploit the ambiguities of inherited forms, to impart new evaluations or valences to them, to borrow forms more expressive of their interests, or to create wholly new forms to answer to changed circumstances. Furthermore, if we think of such interaction not as causative in its own terms but as responsive to larger economic and political forces, the explanation of cultural forms must take account of that larger context, that wider field of force. "A culture" is thus better seen as a series of processes that construct, reconstruct, and dismantle cultural materials, in response to identifiable determinants (1982: 387).

The result of this type of approach is a refreshing reinterpretation of the rapid developments of history since 1400 as a global process in which all nations and peoples underwent major change and not just Europeans.[3]

2. The tradition/modernity paradigm

One of the main problems in the study of tradition and change is that it has been overshadowed by stereotypes and misconceptions of tradition and modernity, the major paradigm of modern Western thought. And the study of tradition and modernity is caught just as deeply in the web of Western prejudices and stereotypes as are, for instance, theories on "primitive mentality" or "orality versus literacy." The tapestry of such oversimplified assumptions, which began around 1750 with invidious contrasts between agrarian tradition and industrial modernity, were carried wholeheartedly into Marxist analysis and have not only thrived up to the 1990s in sociology, social anthropology, and history, but have also formed the very basis for Western development programs. As it turns out, the stance proposed here has only recently appeared in the research on tradition and change, and then only after a great deal of struggle against assumptions which have been thriving since the eighteenth century.

Based on criticisms by Ernest Gellner and Reinhard Bendix, I suggest that the misconceptions of the "tradition/modernity paradigm" are as follows: 1) that the European experiences of the industrial and the French revolutions are considered to be the rule having universal applicability to social theories on ideal types of contrast between tradition and modernity; 2) that the subsequent mechanical models of "traditional" and "modern" societies are sufficient explanatory models; and 3) that where the causes of social change are intrinsic to a society, the presence of certain prerequisites will inevitably bring on industrialization and modernization.

Sociologist S. N. Eisenstadt (1973) summarized the main insights offered by critics of the paradigm: 1) even though traditional societies may differ from modern ones, they differ greatly between themselves in terms of the degree to which their traditions impede or facilitate modernization, 2) a distinction must be made between tradition and traditionalism, where traditionalism is defined as "the more extremist,

negative reaction to the impingement of forces of modernity" and tradition as "the general reservoir of behavior and of symbols of a society", 3) attention must be paid to the evidence of the persistence of tradition and other bonds with the past in modern or modernizing societies, 4) attention should also be paid to how traditional forces or groups have tended to reorganize along new, modern lines, and 5) even though the new states adopted Western models of modernization, initial phases were followed by phases in which traditional models reasserted themselves.

3. How to account for time and change

Scholars from various disciplines have tried to grapple with the problem of the transitory nature of tradition. Wilbert E. Moore, who contributed significantly to sociological theory on change during the 1950s and early 1960s, approached change as "a *part* of the qualities of social systems rather than primarily as an alien and intrusive element" (1963b: vi). Thus, his major point concerned the normality of change and the fact that change is not a phenomenon unique to modern times. Moore credited the interest in the orderly characteristics of social systems as one of the reasons why the functionalist approach failed to account for the intrinsic sources of change (1963b: 9). The model of functionally interdependent units in equilibrium enhanced studies of order and coherence, but hindered studies of change. What Moore attempted to do was to introduce the possibility of thinking systematically about social change and to regard it as regular or lawful.

Anthony Giddens argued along similar lines. He raised the important point that especially functionalist thought has identified time with the diachronic or dynamic, whereas the synchronic analysis represents "a 'timeless snapshot' of society" (1979: 198). Thus, time is identified with change and "timelessness" with social stability. The idea that static

analysis reveals sources of stability and dynamic analysis those of change is untenable according to Giddens. In the first place, a "static" analysis cannot actually be carried out. In the second place, since "stability" means continuity over time, temporality is a constant intrusion (1979: 199). Giddens wished to introduce both temporal and spatial attributes into social theory. He was interested in viewing these attributes as constitutive of society and not simply as peripheral factors.

Social anthropology of the 1950s brought a new emphasis to the study of social change, namely, an interest in the processual nature of society. The British anthropologist Victor W. Turner proclaimed in his book *Schism and continuity in an African society* the concept of the "social drama" which has a "processional form" of phases which are to be approached by observing the "crucial principles of the social structure in their operation, and their relative dominance at successive points in time" (1957: 93), and the complex interaction between the normative patterns of tradition and the "immediate aspirations, ambitions and other ... goals of individuals and groups in the here and now" (1957: xxv). Turner's processual theory, while departing from the static models of functionalism, was not applied to social change as such. In fact, his theory is a more useful tool in explaining continuity, especially in the face of disintegrative factors.

Whereas Turner was motivated by the perennial interest in society that characterizes much of the work done by British social anthropologists, Clifford Geertz was interested in the processual analysis of culture. I will not go into Geertz' work in this paper (Cf. C. Geertz 1959, 1963, and A. W. Geertz 1992: 173–174). The important point to note here, however, is that the processual approaches of Turner and Geertz did not specifically criticize the tradition/modernity paradigm. On the other hand, their emphasis on the processual nature of society and culture are conducive to a critique of that paradigm. This critique was applied with more rigor by, for instance, Sally Falk Moore and Ladislav Holy.

Anthropologist Sherry Ortner has noted that aside from the interest in history raised by the cultural ecologists, it was the political economists

who were chiefly responsible for stressing the importance of history for anthropological study (1984: 142). One political economist who should be mentioned because of his impact on historical studies in anthropology is Marshall Sahlins. He and Elman Service were best known for their neo-evolutionary position. But having spent some time during the 1960s with Lévi-Strauss, Sahlins turned his attention to the problem of structure and its relationship to history in his 1981 study *Historical metaphors and mythical realities* in which he presented an explanatory model of structural change that focused on changes of meaning in patterns of relations. Sahlins argued that the sacrifices of history, event, action, and the world which apparently attend structural analysis are not necessary (1981: 6). His book was meant to show that "history is organized by structures of significance." But his ambition was not just to know "how events are ordered by culture, but how, in that process, the culture is reordered." He asked, "How does the reproduction of a structure become its transformation?" (1981: 8). His answer is that received categories are potentially revalued in practice and functionally redefined.

4. How to account for continuity

Change is a lawful fact of social life. How, then, do we account for continuity? Sociologist Robert A. Nisbet noted over twenty years ago that "nothing is more obvious than the *conservative* bent of human behavior, the manifest desire to preserve, hold, fix, and keep stable" (Nisbet 1969: 271). Boyer would have it that continuity is more or less a figment of our imagination. Others would argue that there is a core of knowledge which does survive the fluctuations of time and which are mobilized in continual adjustments to contemporary situations. One can refer in passing to sociologists Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann's sedimentation theory (1966: 85–89). This theory posits that

human experiences congeal in recollection as sediment. This sediment becomes social when objectivated in a sign system, that is, when the reiterated objectification of shared experiences becomes possible. They argued that its transformation into a generally available object of knowledge allows it to be incorporated into a larger body of tradition "by way of moral instruction, inspirational poetry, religious allegory and whatnot" (1966: 86).

The argument runs further that this aggregate of collective sedimentations can be acquired monothetically, that is, as cohesive wholes, "without reconstructing their original process of formation":

> Since the actual origin of the sedimentations has become unimportant, the tradition might invent quite a different origin without thereby threatening what has been objectivated. In other words, legitimations can succeed each other, from time to time bestowing new meanings on the sedimented experiences of the collectivity in question. The past history of the society can be reinterpreted without necessarily upsetting the institutional order as a result (1966: 87).[4]

Eisenstadt attempted to analyze the dynamics of traditions, the traditions of modernity, the continuities of tradition, and the reconstruction of collective symbols in the processes of social and cultural change. He proposed, among other things, that there are a number of types of response to change, and in all of them traditions, or what Eisenstadt called "reservoirs of tradition" are drawn upon to influence the ways of viewing social and cultural problems and to providing possible answers to the questions of using different institutional, orientational, and/or organizational structures (1973: 337).

Anthropologist Sally Moore argued that we must not forget that process is not necessarily change. Repetition and reproduction are also processes (1986: 321). In agreement with this, I would argue that the idea that "tradition is change" erroneously assumes that change is more "natural" than persistence. I hold that persistence and change are aspects of the same social phenomenon, namely, tradition. In order for a

tradition to remain viable, it must be resilient on the one hand and malleable on the other. It must change in order to retain meaning in the face of changing social and political circumstances (A. W. Geertz 1992).

5. The invention of tradition

The British historian, Eric Hobsbawm, has attempted to explain the phenomenon of deliberately invented actions or narratives which are then presented as being old tradition. In his introduction to an inter-disciplinary collection of essays on the invention of tradition, which Hobsbawm edited together with historian Terence Ranger, Hobsbawm defined invented tradition as follows:

> Invented tradition is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past (1983: 1).

But Hobsbawm insisted that "tradition" in the sense of "invented continuity" must be distinguished from "custom", which dominates "traditional" societies and which gives desired change or resistance to innovation "the sanction of precedent, social continuity and natural law as expressed in history" (1982: 2). It must further be distinguished from convention and routine.

Despite his interest in distinguishing "genuine" traditions from "invented" ones, I argue that he has in fact shown that there is no difference between them. Hobsbawm's definition and the typology he presents elsewhere in his article can just as easily apply to any tradition

whatsoever (and, as it turns out, his definition is often quoted by others for tradition in general).

A recent issue of *Mankind*, edited by the anthropologists Roger M. Keesing and Robert Tonkinson concerned the politics of Melanesian traditionalism. The various papers testify to the role of *kastom*, a pidgin term for "custom" or "tradition", in uniting Melanesians normally divided by gulfs of language and culture into a panregional "Melanesian way." The fact of Melanesian ideologues constructing an imaginary *kastom* raises serious questions about history, tradition, and the indigenous use of "culture" as a symbol in itself, as Keesing noted (1982: 300).

What is significant for us is Keesing's argument that we err in thinking that "spurious *kastom* is radically different from genuine culture" (1982: 301). I think that studies of deliberate inventions of tradition seduce us into the rather common error of distinguishing between "genuine" and "false" culture. Such a distinction is impossible, in my opinion, because it assumes the illegitimacy of the construction of culture. But this is an assumption which clearly belongs to the tradition/modernity paradigm and which seems to be more the product of intellectual conventions than of critical reflection. For, human history seems to indicate that continuity and change go hand-in-hand, and that both of these processes depend on the same product, namely, the invention and reproduction of cultural meaning (Cf. C. Geertz 1965: 206).

6. The history of religions and cognate disciplines

The question which inevitably arises in an introduction of this sort is what can we historians of religions learn from our colleagues in the human and social sciences? This question springs out of a deep-seated distrust of especially the social sciences which we have inherited from

our forefathers. But Lawson and McCauley have argued eloquently that prior attempts by historians of religions to distinguish themselves from theologians, on the one hand, and social scientists, on the other, by locating their approach in the humanities through phenomenology and hermeneutics have still left the history of religions bound to theological assumptions: "Despite their best intentions ... considerable evidence indicates that historians of religions reimport theological assumptions in the course of making their case for the special status of their inquiry" (Lawson-McCauley forthcoming. Others concur on this point. See, for instance, the discussions in Wiebe 1984, 1985, 1988; Proudfoot 1985; Segal 1989; and Penner 1989).

Whether one wishes to share with Lawson and McCauley their pursuit in developing a new cognitive science of religious systems or not, the point is that by ignoring the reflections and achievements in especially the social sciences, we historians of religions risk building castles of sand on antiquated assumptions about some of the most central concepts in our discipline — concepts such as history, religion, tradition, texts, and so on. The issue of tradition and change is a case in point. Where do we find the deepest insights on this problem? In the social sciences (cf. Eisenstadt 1973: 4—8). What, then, have historians of religions been doing for the last century? Writing histories of religions as if these histories have revealed themselves through observable texts and other "historical facts". Historians of religions have only recently begun to abandon the evolutionism of early anthropology (cf. Rudolph 1985: 81—98) and the narrative tradition of early historiography. Problems of social and religious change have mostly been relegated to static assumptions (seldom even formulated as explanatory models) of syncretistic theory (cf. Hartman 1969; Biezais 1975) or considered to be no change at all (Eliade 1962), and the problems of secularization have either been left to the sociologists or explained away as the fluke of modernity (Eliade 1969: vi—viii; Bolle 1965).

There is every reason to keep abreast of developments in the human and social sciences and, if possible, to contribute to them (A. W. Geertz forthcoming). Fortunately, some historians of religions have been doing

just that. One of the best known is R. J. Zwi Werblowsky, who delivered a series of lectures at the School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London) in 1974 that were published in 1976 as *Beyond tradition and modernity*. The essays constitute a survey of religions in modernity, especially Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism, inspired by the theoretical observations of Weber, Shils, Eisenstadt, and Geertz. Werblowsky saw the problem in terms of perception. Change is a fact. What interests the student of change are not only the processes of change, "but also the images of change (*viz.* the presence or absence of such images) in the various cultures" (1976: 5).

Kees W. Bolle is one of the few historians of religions who has attempted to address the historical issue in the context of the social sciences. In a 1970 article published in *Comparative studies in history and society*, Bolle addressed the problem of secularization. I interpret that article as an attempt to illustrate that secular trains of thought had been evident long before the industrial revolution. He did not explicitly make this point, but his examples do. Secondly, he did make the point that secularization is a necessary historical process which makes room "for what is newly felt to be the real world." This process of "negation and acceptance" allows full-scale religious renewal (1970: 251). Bolle saw secularization and mythification (or symbolization) as two aspects of the same events. The reciprocity of a secularization process and a religious tradition is evident throughout history (1970: 258).

Special mention should also be made of a recent feature issue of *The Journal of Oriental Studies* entitled "Beyond the Dichotomy of Secularity and Religion" (1987) in which Michael Pye introduced a new category called the "common language of minimal religiosity" that helps explain better than dichotomous secularization theories the present state of religion in Europe and elsewhere today. Pye argued that recent secularization theory has not been able to account for religious pluralism (1987: 21—22, 27). Pye has also argued in his essay "Religious Tradition and the Student of Religion" (1991b) that the very term "tradition" means, literally, the act of giving across or handing on, and he would

reserve the use of the term in scientific discourse as covering the process and not the substance of being moved along. Furthermore, he sees the identification of the meaning of a tradition as a creative, interpretive act on the part of the exponent, and he suggests that in focusing on the agent of tradition, the student of religion is brought directly into contact with the realm of meaning and its production. He has also developed his arguments on how to study the dynamics of religion in a recent paper on Ernst Troeltsch and Gerardus van der Leeuw (1991a).

The historian of religions, Robert D. Baird, published a study in 1971 in which he attempted to define analytically the fundamental concepts of "religion", "history", and "understanding" in an attempt to sophisticate theorizing in the history of religions and to steer it away from the all too common "essential-intuitional" method towards a "functional-definitional" one. In this connection, Baird argued against the implications of the category "syncretism" on the basis of its roots in the search for origins, a search which Baird argued runs counter to the historical method (1971: 145).

We would do well to follow up on the insights and reflections of our own thinkers, if not those of cognate disciplines. Whether we like it or not and whether we are aware of it or not, we are doing research, textual studies, and field work on the basis of implicit assumptions about religion, myth, history, orality, literacy, and a host of other concepts. These assumptions must become consciously formulated into theories and thereby made subject to the scientific principles of validity, warrant, and proof. We will find that our science needs improvement. But I think we will also find that it can and will contribute positively to the rational and humanistic study of religion.

Notes

1. This paper is based in large part on a chapter in my recently released book, *The invention of prophecy* (1992), but has been substantially restructured and expanded on a number of points found in that chapter. I have furthermore

enjoyed a great deal of inspiration in collaboration with my colleague Jeppe Sinding Jensen during the editorial work on our book *Religion, tradition, and renewal* (1991).

2. See also the thematic issue on African religions in *Religion*, edited by Rosalind Hackett (20: 1990). Hackett subtitled the three main papers as dealing with "Teaching Culture", "Marketing Culture", and "Writing Culture" (Hackett 1990: 307 – Lewis 1990; Murphy 1990; Shaw 1990). See as well Fabian 1983; Barker, *et al.* 1985; Clifford-Marcus 1986; and my own publications on the subject, e.g., A. W. Geertz 1990, 1991.
3. One can find parallels in Johannes Fabian's "coevalness as the *problematic* simultaneity of different, conflicting, and contradictory forms of consciousness" (1983: 146).
4. Historian of religions, Luther H. Martin, argued similarly that historical consciousness "is the social construction of temporality as a significant arena of meaning in all of its dimensions – past and future" (1991: 163).

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Ugo Bianchi

Method, theory, and the subject matter

At a time in which the preeminently historical orientation of the International Association to which the majority of us belongs is being criticized or minimized, I should like to begin with a programmatic statement in which I favor a culture-historical and a comparative-historical understanding of our discipline. I do not intend, of course, to undermine by this the validity of other approaches to the study of religion. At the same time, I will try to eliminate a basic misunderstanding which erroneously identifies the notion of "historical" and the notion of "descriptive", or "pertaining to the past", or "concerning literate cultures only". For my part, I will insist on the integral nature of the discipline we call the "history of religions".

There is much talk today about "method and theory" in the study of religion. This does not mean that method and theory function in a parallel way. Method concentrates on the accurate description of facts, as well as on their historical and structural contextualization and, from this basis, on their comparison and interpretation. Theory, in turn, is an interpretative endeavor intended from the very beginning to permeate the entire cognitive process, conditioning it at the level of both idiographic description and nomothetic interpretation. The *modus operandi* of method is positive and inductive, deriving its authority from a study aiming at discovering genetic (i. e. historical) processes and typological-historical affinities on the basis of an integral, culture-historical scrutiny of data. Theory, on the contrary, comes from on high, highlighting and informing the subject-matter in a kind of deductive, Platonic operation, not always open to falsification, especially in the case of theories based on *a priori* reductionism (I insist on the word *a priori*).

Let us start with a few general considerations. No methodological approach, it seems fair to say, can be entirely wrong, provided it is not explicitly paradoxical or sectarian. But a methodological, and especially a theoretical, approach *can* be reductive in the sense that it can be inadequate to its subject-matter, that is, incomplete from the point of view of an integral treatment of the documentary material and the problems arising from it. It must be emphasized that I am speaking now of factual incompleteness, which is due, so to say, to a deficit of analytical energy. I am not discussing here the philosophical issue of religion as a constitutive category of the human spirit.

Approaches to the study of religion can be reductive in two ways. Some are programmatically selective for philosophical or even ideological reasons. Others are only implicitly reductive. They simply intend to concentrate on a particular aspect of the relevant issues, as may occur in sociological, psychological or anthropological studies of religion.

Two dangers loom especially large here. First of all, a danger of improper generalization based on the results of research that does not extend beyond particular areas or issues, or that even intentionally concentrates only on particular aspects of the documentary materials. Not having a real interest in the polymorphous universe of religion and religions, such research avowedly abstains from global consideration. In some cases it goes so far as to deny the legitimacy of using the very term "religion" in anthropological research, charging the term itself with ethnocentricity.

Alternatively, the anthropological researcher may combine general, explanatory theories of culture and religion with his specific findings and elaborations. This peculiar approach can be seen, for example, among social anthropologists working in the field as "participant observers" and then interpreting their data with recourse to well known general theories of the past, particularly that of E. Durkheim (1915) — for example, Victor Turner's study of color in the ideology of the Ndembu (Turner 1967: 59—92).

On the other hand, the need to avoid *a priori* reductionism does not require a "religious" hermeneutics of things religious, if by "religious"

one intends to contrast the religious and the cultural, as may occur with R. Otto's theory of the Holy (1923), or with M. Eliade's theory according to which one must distinguish between the "pure" Holy and its incarnations in the course of history and in the field of culture (Eliade 1958; 1959). Eliade's would be a hermeneutical operation opposing substance (the purely "religious") with accidents (its different cultural and historical incarnations). But this is an opposition antithetical to the inductive stance of the history of religions.

From the point of view of the history of religions, religion *is* culture, and it shares in a culture's creativity and variety. But it is best to avoid stating that religion is "nothing but culture", a statement that is unnecessarily "defensive" or implicitly polemical, and for this reason open to equivocation in a form of indiscriminate and massive "culturalism".

From the operative point of view of the history of religions, religion's specificity depends not so much on theoretical presuppositions, as on its being intercultural, that is, its specificity depends on the partial, intercultural continuities that allow *Religionswissenschaft* to speak problematically of religion in the singular. Consequently, in the history of religions, the struggle against *a priori* reductionism, whether theoretical, ideological or programmatic, is fought not so much with recourse to contrary assumptions as with sound comparative, cultural-historical research. Once the issue of the relationship, in the different cases, between religion and other cultural elements is posited in the ambit of that type of research, it reveals clearly the full, specific "weight" of religion, discouraging overly-bold attempts to formulate incomplete, falsely-credited exhaustive analyses and interpretations of it. R. Pettazzoni has emphasized that one cannot understand a culture without understanding its religion (e. g. Pettazzoni 1954: 68; 1955: 170; 1959: 65). We can also invert the factors: one cannot scientifically describe or analyze a religion without knowing the cultural context in which it is manifested and manifests itself. Correctly understood, these statements do not imply philosophical relativism or absolute idealistic or materialistic historicism (e.g. in the sense of B. Croce [1915: Pt. I; 1935: 305]

or of Marx [1959]). In fact, culture, as well as religion, must be understood as creative or receptive, open to novelty and to expansion.

The history of religions research must be integral in two senses. As we have said, it must study religion — a given religion or a given religious phenomenon — within the context of the culture or set of cultures to which it belongs. At the same time, the historian of religions must be prepared to hold together the threads, that is, the morphological and historical continuities that link the particular religion or some of its elements to the polymorphous and problematic cross-cultural world of religion. Some scholars emphasize, with the terms "systematic" or "nomothetic", the commitment of the history of religion to comparison, and they oppose nomothetic to idiographic and systematic to historical. Of course, in order to be integral in the first sense, that is, in the idiographic sense, the history of religions is committed to study a religion or a religious phenomenon in all its aspects within a given cultural context, which context is studied, in turn, in all aspects that connect it with religion. This approach can be called idiographic, provided the adjective is not understood to mean merely "descriptive", given the fact that contextualization and historicization are also proper to idiographic study.

But one danger with this nomenclature, it seems to me, is that all historical problems reside in, and are specific to, mere idiographic research, as if the systematic or nomothetic aspects of the history of religions were not historical. The implication would plainly contradict the essential requirements for this discipline to be comparative *qua* historical, and vice versa, given the fact that after having promoted idiographic (but not simply descriptive) research, and having inserted the facts into historical processes, the historian of religions is committed to compare historical processes with others, whether founded on diffusion or on parallel development. Involved in this discussion is the issue concerning the nature and role of phenomenology of religion, which we abstain from discussing at this time. We prefer to concentrate on notions such as "descriptive", "idiographic", "nomothetic", and "systematic".

In a recent address to the XVIth Congress for the History of Religions (Rome, September 1990), D. Wiebe spoke against a tendency towards not distinguishing between "religious project" and "religious studies". The distinction is obvious. But Wiebe blurs it, connecting it with another, quite different in character. He writes:

> There is need of serious reconsideration ... of the insistence over the years that the Association (of the History of Religions) remains an association of historians of religion and that the foundational methods remain philological, historical and phenomenological, and, therefore, essentially descriptive (idiographic) rather than theoretical (nomothetic) ... For however important a descriptive account of religious phenomena and tradition is, it is not sufficient for the intelligent explanation for which science seeks. And without an infusion of theory, this is not likely to be achieved (Wiebe forthcoming).

Identifying historical with idiographic and nomothetic with theoretical, Wiebe does not clarify at which moment theory should be admitted to intervene in research; nor does he qualify the notion and the process of the formation of "theory". Comparative as well as comparative-historical research remains completely absent. Yet, historical comparison must be considered as a path enabling the historian of religions to enunciate those contexts and processes which, far from establishing a limit, may serve as tools for the study of the fundamental dynamisms in the religious and cultural history of mankind. Clearly, the study of these dynamisms is the basic aim of our discipline. Only the "historicization" (in the sense illustrated above) of our problematics will allow us to overcome the difficulties intrinsic to a mere phenomenological, systematic or nomothetic nomenclature developed within the strictures of insupportable generalizations. As already stated, historical comparison can overcome those difficulties because it is open to both continuity and novelty.

Let us add some corollaries concerning the autonomous and positive-inductive character of our discipline as based on a historical-critical

approach. The autonomy of the history of religions is a real one from the very beginning of its scientific procedure – which, of course, does not mean imaginatively swinging in the air, disincarnate, arbitrary or fragmentary. For one thing, it should be clear that philological, literary, ethnological, archaeological and other techniques of positive research are intrinsic to the history of religions as a historical discipline, so that there is no question of a dependence or an independence of the history of religions in relation to these techniques or disciplines which are ordinary, though not necessarily exhaustive, tools for the history of religions. Moreover, the history of religions includes in its problematics the study of the social setting of the phenomena it analyzes and compares, as well as an interest in the psychological manifestations of individuals, collectivities and those selected milieus that are an essential part of its scope as a historical discipline. All in all, what we should be searching for is an extension and a deepening of the very notion of "understanding", an understanding that is not epistemologically identical with the "mutual understanding" of some phenomenologists, but that is integral to the history of religions.

Bibliography

For a *pars construens* of our argument, see the postscript to our article, "Current methodological issues in the history of religions", in: Joseph M. Kitagawa (ed.), *The history of religions* (New York: Macmillan, 1985: 64–67), from which we take some formulations, and the article "History of religions" in: Mircea Eliade (gen. ed.). *The encyclopedia of religion.* New York: Macmillan, 1987.

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Jeppe Sinding Jensen

What sort of "reality" is religion?

1. Talk about religion

A lot of talk about religion often turns out to be about something else. You need not be more than vaguely acquainted with the history of the study of religion to be aware of the fact that religion has been and can be studied from many different angles. Some studies of religion are of a psychological persuasion and refer to religion as a product of human feelings, motivations, needs, etc. Other studies of religion are sociological or social-anthropological and display, I would say, an interest in society more than in religion. These initial and somewhat rash statements should not be taken as any serious kind of analysis; they merely present an impression that an historian of religions, like myself, may acquire after some years in this vast and diverse field of scholarly inquiry. Consequently, if we want to know what sort of reality religion as such is, we may not become so much the wiser by consulting these approaches and their practitioners. These reservations, on the other hand, presuppose the existence of religion as a category of its own, a very much contended issue in the study of religion, no matter from which angle it has been pursued. But let us for the time being assume than it will be possible to argue for such an idea.

Conversely, it is well known that psychological and social interpretations and explanations of religion have been deemed "reductionist" by some theologians and historians and phenomenologists of religion in so far as they leave out the dimension of "The Sacred" and are considered more to explain "away" religion by expressing views of it

that differ from the ones held by the believers.[1] Without going into detail, it is my contention that the views of these "religionists" are skewed, theologically biased and scholarly unsound. They tell us very little about religion or religions, and certainly not much about the believers' point of view as these are usually subsumed under the investigator's own creed. But they do tell us a lot about metaphysical speculations and worldview constructions in certain academic quarters in the twentieth century. As it is not my business either to promote or to eradicate religion, I shall only say that, in my opinion, such religious expressions are incommensurate and thus also incompatible with a scientific investigation of religion.

Is it at all possible to delineate a theory of religion, to compound a definition, or, as Claude Lévi-Strauss has very aptly termed it, a generalized interpretation of religion; i. e. what do we mean by the term?[2] It has been remarked often enough that discussions about definitions of religions are futile and a waste of time. But it certainly is a sorry state for an academic discipline if it can not or will not disclose its subject matter — to put it in somewhat positivistic terms. For many reasons, public as well as academic, dialogue with other scholarly fields, fund-raising, and not least, teaching students, it is utterly important that we express some consistent view of what we are doing in a way that relates to a disciplinary consensus and that will, in turn, somehow converge with the world around us, i. e., in some way and somewhere down the line be testable as to whether it makes sense as an instance of scientific discourse.

Let us disregard the commonplace objections to the attempt to produce definitions of religion as they have been voiced, e.g., by Toronto anthropologist I. C. Jarvie:

> Generalized attempts to characterize religion founder on philisophical (*sic*) challenges to the enterprise as such. Particular attempts to characterize religion founder on the intractable diversity of the evidence and the failure to keep in mind the problem (1988: 37).

However convincing at first glance, such inherent fusions of emic and etic categories, or, as it may be put, in the more conventional idiom of the philosophy of science, of object- and metalanguage, impede the development of a useful range of concepts in such a metalanguage. If religion, in particular instances, is really as diverse as Jarvie sees it, one could argue that the definitional task is even more indispensable. And, whatever else science is, it simply does not work without metalanguages. Although religion in an intellectualist interpretation appears to be an explanation of the world and, therefore, some kind of metalanguage, there still remain significant differences between the intentions and validations of scientific analysis and the chanting of mantras.[3]

The following deliberations are reflective of a current institutional environment in Denmark where a new scholarly generation has sparked off theoretical interests, as well as of my own methodological considerations in connection with more empirical studies on various aspects of Islamic tradition. This discussion combines approaches from the history of religions and social anthropology. What is it we do as historians of religions, and why should *we* do it? Why not leave it to social scientists and philologians? Which also means: "What is Islam as a Religion?", including the scriptural, ideological, theological and theoretical dimensions of this tradition, and including its practical, ritual, habitual, cultural and socio-political aspects.[4]

2. Religion + reality = REALIGION

It was appropriate that the 1989 IAHR conference on methodology in Warsaw concluded with a statement concerning the status of the study of religions as a human and cultural science based upon a conception of religion as a "reality that interconnects social activities" (Tyloch 1990: 8). In a statement like this, religion obviously functions as a grammatical subject and there is little doubt that the authors also meant

that religion somehow functions to connect social activities. On the other hand, it is likely that the same authors were, and are, aware of the current discredit of functionalism, as well as of the increased recognition of the fact that religion as a conceptual category is a product of scholarly imagination. Thus, the ontological state of religion as a "reality" is highly problematic, as is, consequently, how one may account sensibly for the claim that it is capable of interconnecting "social activities", i. e. political, economical, sexual, gastronomical affairs, and whatever else humans do.[5]

There is a seeming paradox here. If religion really is to accomplish or account for all this, it will somehow have to be on the same level. That is, religion has to be as real as all other social activities, which is scarcely possible if religion is no more than a figment of our imagination or a manifestation of something mysterious called "The Sacred" or "The Transcendent" which is beyond the reach of any rational or disciplined discourse.[6]

The "nonempirical" must then be made empirical; we have to "realize" religion. The construction of an object may well be said to represent the fundamental scientific act. This means assigning names to things, making categories, stipulating conditions, explicating theories and all the rest that goes with scholarly activity in *any* discipline that aspires to move beyond pre-logical mentality. The first condition, however, for such a move in the study of religion is that the confusion between religions as social phenomena and the transcendent referents of religions is abandoned. That is, to talk about religion is not to talk about "God", the "Transcendent", the "Sacred", etc. but about humans, their ideas and doings. To this we shall return.

Obviously, categories can be more or less useful or successful. In the study of religion which, like anthropology, is given a global assignment, the formation and discussion of conceptual tools is extremely important – and time-consuming. To conceive of "religion" has proved so tenuous to some that it has been given up and substituted by something else like "cosmology", "worldview", "classificatory system", etc. There certainly is power in a name, but the procedures of

research and the re-presentations of scholarly knowledge about religion(s) must depend on what connotations are intended to be conveyed to whom and why. It is essentially a problem of translating creatively – and knowingly.[7]

The trouble begins when certain categories and institutions are considered prior to others and thus more real and responsible for social causation and determinism of any kind.[8] This problem is detectable in innumerable works by historians, social scientists, etc., who consider religion a cover-up, a mystification and compensation for *real* causes like lust for power, greed, etc. It is an explanatory paradigm that becomes visible, e.g., in publications on present-day Iran where the Ayatollah's religious declarations are often taken as smoke screens for internal power-games. That may also be true, but what if they really mean what they say? – if they believe in what they do because they want to be, by their own definitions, good Muslims? There is, perhaps, somewhere in the background, a strange but persistent conviction that if the actions appear morally dubious from a Western point of view, they cannot "really" be religious – as if religion *per se* is a nice and friendly thing. Once upon a time being a good Christian might mean killing Indians because they had no soul ...

3. Exit functionalism

As historians of religions, we are immediately aware that religions work and the only problem is to account for this in theoretically adequate terms. Hans Penner has acutely pointed out the many serious flaws in functionalist accounts of the origin of religion, whether psychological, sociological, or existential.[9] A curious and overlooked fact is that in "religionist" explanations, religion originates in, as well as functions as, a disclosure of the transcendent reality of the Sacred, the Numinous, etc., so that religion again becomes a dependant variable and nothing

more than the accidental subject matter for the study of the ultimate (theologically constituted) theoretical object, i. e., "The Holy" as ontological reality.

It is, of course, a truism that religion functions, and explanations as to how religion works certainly do contribute to our understanding of religion, irrespective of whether the cause or origin of religion as such can be accounted for. Where Penner in his recent work sees functionalism as an impasse, a deadlock in the study of religion, he finds promise in the appropriation of structuralist methods if the study of religions is to advance from its present position.

4. Structure and religion

Structuralism is probably the most misunderstood theory in the human and social sciences. In some disciplines, e.g., literary criticism, it is now considered old-fashioned and almost passed over while it still has not been really accepted in others — the study of religion comes to mind here.[10] Whatever structuralism has been labelled: mentalist, formalist, intellectualist, etc., it is essentially concerned with meaning, not as a psychological, but as a linguistic and social phenomenon. We may, thus, place it on the side of the linguistic turn in philosophy. We cannot study minds for we do not know when we are empathetic enough to perform empathy; similarly, in the study of religion, we cannot not know a thing about God, or about the world for that matter, but we can study the expressions, the said, the discourse. A premise of structuralism is the existence of what Karl Popper called the "Third World" of objective meaning apart from the physical and psychological worlds. A frequently cited example is the knowledge contained in the books of a public library.

Opponents of structuralism have seized upon the advent of "post-structuralism" to legitimate their rejection. But it is undeniable that

structuralism has set the tenor of today's methodological debate. In this respect it may be seen as a "founder of discourse".[11]

Structuralism studies meanings as social facts, as elements of discourse and as parts of semantic universes that are systemic and, in some sense, language-like. Similarly, any religious system may be viewed as a *langue* and religious expressions, explicit as implicit, as instances of *parole*. It must be stated emphatically here that religion *is not* said to be language — only stated that methodologically it makes sense and produces new insight to claim that these two meaning systems may be approached in somewhat the same way. Religious as well as linguistic statements and acts are meaningful not by reference, but through relations internal to the system as such.[12]

The skeptics will say: What is the point here? Does it make any difference? Yes, it makes a world of difference, because from now on religious meanings are not located in or emanating from The Sacred or in the believers' minds, but are intersubjective, textual, public, symbolic and a species of cultural and ideological reality.[13] Gone are the days of theistic-theological as well as of subjectivist and empathy-based hermeneutics. To state it in philosophical terms concerning the theory of meaning: this is an antirealist position, and possibly the only way out of the present methodological quagmire.

There are and have been serious objections to the lofty and speculative nature of structuralism, as too "French", as, at most, a theory of superstructures, etc. If we classify structuralism as basically coterminous with an antirealist theory of meaning, it certainly can be hard to swallow for empiricist philologians or functionalist anthropologists more interested in social formations than their cultural vestments.[14] But, interestingly enough, it ought not be so, for in fact it means that we are now in the process of according the symbolic realm the same status as the social, a project already initiated by the French school around Durkheim.

5. Semiotics of religion

Semiotics, the general study of the production and organization of meaning, is closely related to structuralism: each of them is unthinkable without the other, and both are studies of communication. Religion as communication involves two worlds – call them profane and sacred, or, if too theologically laden, this and the "other" world. The ontological state of this "other" world is of no concern to us here. We speak of a symbolic entity, an imaginary universe, which is real in the sense that people believe in it and it therefore constitutes structures of both plausibility and relevance.[15] Religion, on the ideological, theoretical side, comprises the ideas about the "other" world and what this means for the shape, meaning, destiny, etc., of this world; and on the side of practice, it constructs the norms for proper forms of intercourse with that "other" world. Religion, then, in a generalized interpretation, consists of ideological models of the world (a cosmology) and certain models for (an axiology) the modes of communication and behavior in the(se) world(s). It is not the "other" world as such but the cultural systems consisting of signs, symbols, meanings, etc., that is our theoretical object.[16] Many theories of religion have taken the referent of religion, i. e., "The Sacred" and made it the essence of religion. The "Sacred" may be construed analytically as a category of the general metaphysical and imaginary referent(s) of religion(s), as a short-hand designation, or as a generalized interpretation in the analysts' or researchers' etic and analytically constructed terminologies in order to classify the total number of supernatural entities, including such diverse phenomena as *dei otiosi* and ancestor-spirits. In this way, "The Sacred" and its equivalents function as conventional metaphors in the metalanguage of scholars. It is a commonplace objection that some traditions do not themselves recognize the distinction between "two worlds" and, therefore, such a distinction is supposedly invalid for scholarly discourse. This is *only* the case, however, when you confound the object-language of the studied religious community with the metalanguage of

the scholarly community. In the same way, we shall have to view the problems concerning referentiality. Saying that religious discourse refers to supernatural entities does not mean that scientific investigations of such discourse necessarily do the same. Again object- and metalanguages are based and validated on different kinds of referentiality (the person claiming a putative experience of being Napoleon Bonaparte *refers* to a different explanatory framework than the psychiatrist who refers to a [putative] scientific theory of personality disorders). There is nothing wrong with referentiality, it only depends on what you refer to. Former hermeneutic practice in the study of religion demanded that believer and scholar share the same frame of reference. In what other manner could one supposedly account phenomenologically for religious experience and the essence of religion than through empathy? The idea was morally, theologically and perhaps even politically edifying. The problem is that this does not work as scholarly validation; it is an exercise in methodological futility.

What a scholar should refer to – and here we are speaking of methodological and not moral normativity – is not her/his own religious experience, or the ontological truth of The Sacred, but the existence of symbolic universes that refer/point to some realm, which *we* in *our* kind of metalevel scientific discourse normally call "supernatural". Consequently, we may say that if religion has an essence at all it is the same essence as that of language and other cultural systems, namely communication.[17]

Religious meaning, as we now see it, is not inherent in phenomena; it is ascribed and these ascriptions and their interpretations are what we may and can study.[18] To cope with the linguistic reality of religion, we need structuralism, semiotics, and hermeneutics, because, however diverse these three are habitually considered to be, they complement each other in a wide-ranging theoretical matrix.

6. Religion as language

> Religion, then, is a system of communication or a "system of thought and action," that is to say, a communal *praxis* with established "usages" by means of which a community acts out for itself certain ways of "bringing itself together" or "behaving" properly under certain conditions (Larson 1978: 452).

Such systems lend themselves to more kinds of analysis and explanation. Here the emphasis is on formal analysis of the cultural system and not on causal explanation of the socio-psychological effects and/or causes of religious *parole*. We are concerned with the semantic and syntactical rules that may account for religious pragmatics. Put differently, religion as a sign-system is a paradigmatic repertoire of virtual meanings, a stock of symbolic competence. These may then be actualized, realized in a syntagmatic process. This realization of *langue*, however, is always articulated and situated in a social context; it is cultural practice including the intentions, interpretations, and meanings of the actors and their performance. In brief, religion is the means whereby (some) people express themselves to themselves. It is a medium for *Selbstverständnis*, 'self-understanding', or as I suggest we call it in English, as no equivalent term exists, "autonoesis".[19]

Such an approach may well be classed as cognitive functionalism, but the crucial difference is that the semiotic approach is not concerned with the social effects or causes in the first instance as much as with the formal properties of the symbolic expressions. It is an attempt to reach the level of sophistication in symbolic analysis demanded by Clifford Geertz in his 1966 definition of religion. The formal analyses are also not (primarily) concerned with how symbolic systems (languages) are learned and how they function in cognition as such. An historian of religions may well study the symbolism of e.g., baptism, even in ritual practice, without being concerned with how many "neuronic clicks" it actually takes to understand the event. Case studies on religious aphasia will most likely be difficult to conduct.[20]

Meaning in religion has been much sought after, and in many ways: by reference to revelation, history, etc., but somehow always outside religion as we conceive of it here. History of religions could be a discipline *sui generis* if it were to focus on religions as meaning systems and then explaining and interpreting the articulations of such systems, whether they are explicit or implicit, *in relation* to the systems themselves rather than to factors external to the systems. Within such a theoretical framework the study of religion is part of the wider field of ethno-hermeneutics, i. e., the study of indigenous interpretation in theory and practice.[21]

As regards the relations between religion and society and the transformations of each, we may now see how religion as a certain register of discourse may be linked to societal changes without implying a necessary and causal primacy of either "religion" or "society". Nothing tells us that religion is more "superstructural" than society when defined and understood as semiotic entities. As historians of religions, we are even aware that religion may change history, or, alternatively, if the causes of historical events are found to be of a socio-economical nature, religion may supply the codes and idioms through which the changes are expressed or made understandable. Religion supplies the structures of meaning which make human action relevant and plausible.[22]

We are trying here to solve the problems that arise if religion is seen as hierophany and sacred, on the one hand, and society and history, on the other — as profane and determined primarily by rational choice, economic forces, political reality, etc. It would then be difficult to understand religion as a "reality that interconnects social activities".[23]

Let us instead advocate a view in which religion along with other ideological and cultural systems is seen as consisting of symbolic codes and objectification structures by means of which man is able to define himself and the world in the practice of "indigenous hermeneutics". We may, in fact, say that it is *only* as a semiotic (i. e., meaningful) phenomenon that religion is capable of interconnecting social activities. These in turn have semiotic properties as they are part of meaningful behavior; money, food, sex, the family, the highway code, society as

such, are all systems of abstraction and signification that make (non)sense. Within an Islamic framework, for example, religion may interconnect the ways in which you eat, make money, raise your children, etc., all specifiable through the single principle of *Tahara*, 'ritual purity', which, in Islam, is mainly a matter of maintaining a God-given cosmological order.

It may well be that humans are mainly moved by self-interest, but then, what "Self" is, and what interests are deemed legitimate, are defined by cultural systems. And in all traditional societies that refer to a metaphysically validated worldview and ethos, the most important, and *the* cultural system which is placed at the apex of society's hierarchy of communication, is religion.

Notes

1. The whole issue of reductionism is indeed complicated. One may, for the sake of brevity, say that a reductionist account of religion usually treats religion as a dependent variable of something else, e.g., psychological needs, and not as an independent variable. There is a long and continuing debate on reductionism in and around the study of religion. To get an impression of later developments, see Penner 1989; Wiebe 1988. It seems that proponents of the religious view of religion are at a loss to explain what it means that a religious phenomenon is religious (cf. McMullin 1989). Penner 1989, ch. 1 is a perceptive critique of the religionist program which he says: "is to place the understanding of religion beyond theoretical bounds and to locate the study of religion beyond science" (1989: 23).
2. Lévi-Strauss 1978, ch. VI: "The meaning and use of the notion of model." Battles have been endlessly fought over whether the nature of the definitions of religion should be substantive, nominal, functional, operational, etc., and the consequence seems to be a general reluctance to define anything at all. This is where the concept of "generalized interpretation," the construction of an image of religion from a set of metaphors that have a

certain degree of precision but at the same time flexibility and open-endedness, is of help. A comprehensive discussion of these issues may be found in Poole 1986. The present author is working on a research-project of this nature.

3. On the relations between religion and science confusion abounds, but see Wiebe 1989 (incl. further references) for a convincing attempt to separate the two by judging them by intention and not by cognitive function. The issue is, of course, also related to general philosophical questions about the criteria for rationality in scientific discourse. The issue is currently hotly debated. For a pragmatist consensus-view, for example, see Rorty 1987; for a realist view, see Davenport 1987.
4. For generations "orientalists" have been in the habit of representing a reified essentialist and orthodox view of Islam based on the scriptures. This approach evidently collided with twentieth-century (social-) anthropological studies of social practice, which tended to disregard the fact that the communities studied were part of a long cultural/historical development which was (at least in part) defined by the texts. To put it bluntly, one might say that both parties tried methodologically to explain away their own scholarly deficiencies. Things look better now, for recent developments indicate a blurring of genres and a much more pronounced interest in Islam within the history of religions as a discipline; see, e.g., R. Martin 1985, as well as anthropologists seriously engaging in the study of a scriptural tradition, e.g., Eickelman-Piscatori 1990: 18–21.
5. J. Z. Smith 1982 has discussed the "invention of religion" in Western scholarship. Cf. also Jarvie: "There is a more obvious problem with the empirical/non-empirical distinction for the social scientist. All the entities and relationships that social scientists deal with are non-empirical. Notoriously, social institutions, Durkheim's assertions notwithstanding, are abstractions, as are social relationships involving kin, power, wealth and, of course, belief. Most fundamental of all, the human person is an abstract construction on, or attribution to, a physical body" (1988: 31).
6. Curiously enough, the most opaque statements about religion seem to come from philosophers "of religion" who tend to skip right across the historical and social data of religion to that which they consider to be "really Real": questions of ultimate well-being, salvation and other *goals* of religious systems or the putative referents of religious discourse: gods, etc. See, e.g., Hick who approvingly cites Eliade's famous 1958 statement: "Obviously

there are no *purely* religious phenomena ... Because religion is human it must for that very reason be something social, something linguistic, something economic — you cannot think of man apart from language and society. But it would be hopeless to try and explain religion in terms of any of those basic functions" (1989: 15). But then, and tautologically, religion seems to be the only such purely religious phenomenon.

7. For a relevant and inspiring discussion of these problems in a continuum ranging from the dadaist views of Paul Feyerabend to the reality of Amazonian shamanist visions, see Overing, e.g.: "The 'problem' of translation (and of 'definition') is not a problem of translation, but one of relevant emphasis and, more importantly, of knowledge, experience, and creativity" (1988: 76).
8. A radical and profound discussion of the status of analytic constructs and concepts in anthropology is offered by Wagner 1981. In fact, there are societies that express in kinship relations what others express in economic transactions, some may express in religion what others find in public opinion, or cultural fads, or puberty rites. Why not? If money really seems to mean the same around the world, it may be a result of the historical development towards Western hegemony. Today nothing seems to stand in the way of the market economy. There is a serious danger that we misread other societies, cultures and religions by superimposing on them a fixed hierarchy of values in regards to "what matters most" for humans. In fact, this is where politics creep in, also in the study of religion.
9. See Penner 1989: 103—129, including references to the general debate in the philosophy of science on the nature and state of functionalist explanations in the social sciences. Penner's contribution is so much more valuable in that it relates directly to problems of research strategies relevant to historians of religions. One premise of the whole functionalist enterprise actually deserves a closer inspection. It is the notion that religion, naturally somehow, is thought to be a good thing, if for nothing else, then at least for maintaining social order, contributing to self-regulatory social systems, etc., and for personal psychological or existential well-being. What is completely overlooked by the functionalists (mostly in the sociology of religion) is that religion not only resolves conflicts of whatever kind, but actively "creates" them also. A lot of people get crazy from religion, social tensions arise from sectarian disputes, etc. The Freudian and Marxist perspectives need to be revisited now and then. A recent and basically

functionalist work that by its title alone ought to be relevant for the present project is Stark and Bainbridge, a curious work, however, that operates from the perspective of social-psychological game-theory.

10. It would be an impossible task to write the history of structuralism and describe "its" fate in various disciplines. Suffice it to say here that some, e.g., in literary criticism, believed it (in the 1960s) to be the catch-all scientistic approach, while others, e.g., in philosophy, turned to the ontological aspects of structuralism. It is noteworthy that a theoretical vision that originated in linguistics has, so far, had so little impact in the various philologies. In the Classics, some exceptionally interesting structural studies on religion have been produced in France during the past generation by the Parisian "school" around Marcel Detienne and J.-P. Vernant; see e.g., Gordon 1981. Archaeologists are also showing an interest in structuralism as well as other novel theories, cf. Tilley 1990. On Lévi-Strauss as the "founder" of structuralism in anthropology, cf. e.g., Leach 1967, Morris 1987, and Boon 1985; for further advances in America and France respectively, see Rossi 1982 and Izard 1982. Students of religion have, on the whole, neglected structuralist theory, whereas anthropologists have generally accepted it. In Denmark structural studies in anthropology, also on matters "religious", have been noted since the early 1970s.
11. Post-structuralism does not mean *after* in the sense that structuralism is now dead, gone and buried. On the contrary, in anthropology and other disciplines, it means that structuralism has become a common-place methodology. Everybody knows and uses it when advantageous and are then asking "now what ...?" Cf. Norris (1987: xii).
12. The standard objections here are: What about history? and, What about people? Lévi-Strauss has been accused of having a "morally" wrong methodological approach (1978: 71), a criticism that does not make sense. First: he is a nice guy; second: it really is no one's concern. On the historic and diachronic aspects, the confusion has been somewhat greater; in my view, one only has to conceive of (religio-) historical events as articulations of religious systems that *simultaneously* undergo transformational changes. What is important is that the systemic aspect is always and necessarily present, otherwise there would be no (production of) meaning anyway. Need it be said that by systemic there is no mention of neatly packed immutable systems of meanings. Most sign-systems are as messy and fuzzy-edged as ordinary natural language.

13. For a very readable introduction to this perspective on the reality of the symbolic see C. Geertz 1973: Ch. I: "Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture." Geertz, of course, has been attacked by many who (mostly) did not get the gist of his ideas, a discussion we must omit here. Let it only be stated that the views expressed in this paper are conceivable only on the basis of Geertz' ideas on "cultural systems" as expressed in a number of his methodologically interesting publications.
14. There have been protracted (even prolix) arguments as to the ontological status of "structures", their point of origin, and their causative effect (!); see e.g., Gellner 1985: 128–157 for a typical derogatory approach that displays limited competence on the subject. Lévi-Strauss himself has made it no easier by referring at one time to the brain (cf. e.g., Tilley 1990: 41–42 and Morris 1987: 285–291). For someone who is neither a French nor an English native speaker, it has been an interesting exercise to see what meanings the terms "*Esprit humain*" and "Human mind" may connote. In French, it seems to relate more to something public, like a "*principe pensant*", 'principles of thinking', whereas the English definitions of mind are rather psychologistic (cf. *Oxford American dictionary* [1980 ed.], s.v. Mind: "1. The ability to be aware of things and to think and reason, originating in the brain. 2. a person's thoughts ..."). Is there some explanation here of the uneasiness with which the Anglophone world received structuralism? Some have voiced suspicion as to whether these "structures" could actually be scientifically proved and how they cause meaning, which amounts to asking how Danish grammar *causes* meaning in a sentence, or asking how you prove the rules of chess. The idea of the symbolic as a "Third World" is something that one must simply "visualize". How to go about understanding and explaining it is another thing altogether. A recent and critical overview of methodological consequences of the shift to meaning in anthropology is O'Meara 1989. Still, the best introduction to structuralism available to the student of the history of religions is Penner 1989.
15. Berger-Kellner 1982 contains very accessible definitions and examples of structures of relevance and plausibility. Although they do not mention it, "their" structures are, in so far as they are concerned with a sociology of meaning, in fact, also of a semiotic nature.
16. Some may, and will, think of this position as an impoverishment of the study of religion, but I must maintain that we cannot, in a disciplined and informed study committed to certain forms of rationality, claim access to

the putative super-natural "realities" of the referents of religious discourse. Today, Christian dogmaticians, familiar with the boundary conditions set by contemporary philosophy, will realize that dogmatics can only speak about "revelation" as a this-worldly and human phenomenon, i. e., through the texts, etc. As an example of such non-realist theologies/philosophies of religion, see Hick 1989: 190–209. The anti-realist positions in meaning-theory is today forcefully argued by, among others, the British philosopher Michael Dummett. Antirealists deny that the sentences of our language have a content of meaning determined by circumstances not acknowledgeable by us, and state that the meaning of our sentences can thus only be determined by circumstances whose occurrence or nonoccurrence will, in principle, always be recognizable to us. An interesting contribution concerning the nonreferentiality of religion in general and of ritual in particular is Penner 1985.

17. Waardenburg puts it this way: "Die Religionsforschung richtet sich also ausdrücklich auf die menschliche Dimension der religiösen Tatbestände und Religionen" (1986: 58) 'The study of religion is thus expressly directed to the human dimension of religions and their data' [editor's translation]. I agree with Waardenburg's repeated suggestion that religions are "ganz allgemein Zeichensysteme" 'at their foundation sign-systems' [editor's translation], see e.g., his contribution to the *Encyclopedic dictionary of semiotics* (1986: Tome 2), s.v. "Religious studies". For important contributions to this development, see Lawson 1976; Larson 1978. See also Jensen 1986 for a discussion of ritual as a semiotic phenomenon, an elaboration upon themes from Lawson 1976; Larson 1978; Penner 1985.
18. The range of studies may indeed be very wide, from investigations of the nature of language in magical acts (Tambiah 1985: 17–59) to theories concerning the linguistic and cognitive characteristics and properties of ritual systems (Lawson-McCauley 1990). In relation to the latter, it is perhaps no coincidence that their work entitled *Rethinking religion: Connecting cognition and culture* appears in the "Anthropology" catalogues of Cambridge University Press but not in their catalogues on "Religious Studies". Who decides what is relevant for whom? In the passing, Leach 1976 ought to be a standard primer for all students of religion.
19. A Greek colleague has endorsed my suggestion for "autonoesis" as a neologism. There is reason here to ponder the concept of "auto-communication" as put forward by the Soviet semiotician Jurij Lotman who

defines this notion as a form of communication that does not convey new information, but (merely) repeats the same message. We may translate this to the realm of religion since one remarkable feature of religious and ritual communication is its pronounced redundancy. People do not regularly attend church or perform the Islamic *Salat* five times a day to hear something new, on the contrary ...

20. In anthropology one well-known representative of cognitive functionalism is Mary Douglas 1970. C. Geertz once said: "Only when we have a theoretical analysis of symbolic action comparable in sophistication to what we have now for social and psychological action, will we be able to cope effectively with those aspects of social and psychological life in which religion (or art, or science, or ideology) plays a determinant role " (1966: 42). Interesting is the penultimate word, "determinant", which indicates that Geertz allows for religion as a defining factor in human life. He displays here his Weberian inspiration: there may be many non-religious causes for man's actions but the course of them may well be determined by religion.
21. To illustrate this point, see Penner 1989 for an analysis of Hindu caste as well as of a number of mythic cycles from the Puranas in term of purity and nonpurity. Similarly, one could think of Muslim dietary laws as primary expressions of the Islamic "*Geist*", in terms of an underlying structure opposing order to nonorder. One recurrent problem, however, seems to be the difficulties modern scholars have in actually understanding what it means to have religion as "a sacred canopy" suspended over all spheres of human life in which the symbolic (world) "has the last word." On the terms "Indigenous hermeneutics" and "ethno-hermeneutics", see A. W. Geertz; "indigenous hermeneutics" is the local activity of producing meaningful interpretations, the indigenous act of constructing reality. "Ethno-hermeneutics", on the other hand, is the "study and explication of this activity in both its implicit and explicit forms" (1990: 36). This conception of the task of the history of religions lies behind (most) current disciplinary development in Denmark; to my knowledge the term "ethno-hermeneutics" was coined by A. W. Geertz. The "Ethno-" should not connote any derogatory political assumptions about "natives", etc. The point is that we are "*all Ethno*". In fact, the activity is not new, but we lacked a name for it. Luther H. Martin favors such a program: "In this sense, the most interesting history of religions would be neither that of formal belief nor

that of operative practices, but the history of their relations as constitutive of a consummate religious system" (1990: 115–116). See also H. G. Kippenberg on the renewed interest in Max Weber's thoughts on religion as "das Medium der Beantwortung von Sinnfragen und der Regulierung praktischer Beziehungen" (1990: 76).

22. One example of this is the transformation of Shi'i Muslim identity and ideology among the Shi'i population of Lebanon. From an interpretation (local exegesis) of martyrdom, the religious expressions were turned into an ideology of revolt. Of course, the Shiites protested against social inequality and economic oppression, but to be aware of that presupposes an available ideology that condemns such a situation as well as supplies the relevant idiom of criticism and points to a solution. On the basis of Shi'i Islam as a symbolic repertoire, the mullah Musa As-Sadr in the 1970s expressed the frustration of his community and made his interpretation of the situation and its concomitant vision of a different future both relevant and plausible. See As-Sadr 1972.
23. In fact, the history of religions has seen quite enough of vulgar materialism, also by scholars who can in no way be accused of harboring Marxist views. The conviction that a set of fixed relations exist between, e.g., modes of subsistence and ideology has been quite commonplace also in social science, but this "correspondence theory" is currently the target of criticism in e.g., social anthropology, see Rossi (1982: 265–293). Or, as stated by Luther Martin: "it can be argued that the relationship between society and culture as analytical concepts is neither natural nor necessary" (1990: 115). The point is that aspects of society and culture may be viewed from different angles. Concepts are "labels merely for points of view adopted either by the scientist or by the natives," as Gregory Bateson stated back in 1936, where he continued, "such concepts as economics, kinship and land tenure, and even religion, language, and 'sexual life' do not stand so surely as categories of behavior, but tend to resolve themselves into labels for points of view from which all behavior may be seen" (1936: 236).

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Rosalind I. J. Hackett

The symbolics of power discourse among contemporary religious groups in West Africa[1]

By the year 2000, approximately one half of the world's population will be living in an urban context. For example, Dakar, the capital of Senegal in West Africa, has doubled in size each decade since its creation at the end of the last century (O'Connor 1983: 48). This projection is significant for scholars of religion since urbanization generally engenders a more marked religious pluralism and interaction. This is all the more so in Third World metropoles such as Sãn Paulo, Seoul and Lagos, where a variety of religious groups compete to interpret and transform difficult urban living conditions in cultures where religion has traditionally been associated with everyday needs and realities. Not only do numbers of urban dwellers increase, often swelled by rural migrants and refugees, but so do the numbers and types of religious groups which cater to them. Cohabitation, social mobility, commodified ethnicity and improved mass communications and marketing techniques, whether in the form of religious broadcasting or religious literature, transform and translate religious "others" into living realities and breakdown conventional territorialities and boundaries. Religion is intimately related to questions of power and ethnicity, both crucial factors in urban life. The close proximity of the seats of political and religious power in the city promotes either complicity or critique.

The question I am posing here is whether scholars of religion are willing and able to address and analyze contemporary urban religious cultures, or are we to leave it to sociologists and government statisticians? My interest in the nature and dynamics of religious pluralism stems from my field experience in Nigeria, particularly the town of

Calabar in south-eastern Nigeria, where I was confronted by a fascinating kaleidoscope of religious activity. As a historian of religion I wanted to know how people experienced and made sense out of such religious diversity, and what led them to make the choices they did in constructing their own micro-religious worlds. As an anthropologist I was intrigued by the factors behind such religious pluralism, what sustained it and how religious differentiation and religious identity were negotiated and constructed.

In my published study, *Religion in Calabar: The religious life and history of a Nigerian town*, in addition to documenting the various forms of institutional and popular religion, I identified a number of themes and developments which I saw as constituting some unity behind the diversity of religious forms. They were religion as a transformative power (as a source of protection, explanation and control, and blessings), religion as a sustaining force, and the processes of spiritualization, institutionalization, secularization, privatization, religious self-determination, homogenization and religious mobility (Hackett 1989, ch. 10). There have been a number of other regional studies of religion (one of the major new directions of religious studies). Some have focused on religion at the national level, others on towns or cities, while some have examined the spectrum of cults and festivals of particular areas (for fuller references and comments on both African and other studies of religious pluralism see Hackett 1989: 2–16). The challenge of studying religious pluralism is how to avoid the pitfall of superficiality and rather capture the religious culture as it is lived, experienced and perceived by the participants. As stated earlier, due to improved mass communications and marketing strategies, as well as changed work patterns and mass education, there is a greater mingling and overlap of religious ideas and voices than ever before. It is of course important to describe and document the various components of this matrix, but it is more challenging and rewarding to seek to understand the processes and patterns of variation and conflict and similarity and harmony. It also sets us closer to the religious experience of those who operate within a religiously pluralistic context.

Returning to Ghana and Nigeria in 1991, I was struck more than ever before by the competitiveness of the religious situation and the centrality of the concept of power in religious discourse and interaction. In religious literature, sermons, revival meetings, the word "power" constantly recurs. More striking are the actual personal power conflicts of religious leaders and groups. In the course of one weekend in Benin City, I met separately with two religious figures of national renown — High Priest Osemwegie Ebohon of the Olokun Traditional Religious Foundation and Archbishop Professor Benson Idahosa, founder of the Church of God Mission International. These titans spoke of their own power and of their clash on television on one occasion over the subject of miracles.[2] For the visitor, both of their compounds generate a sense of power, with the aggrandizing images of Idahosa in the entrance hall of his church, and the imposing shrines, walls and sculpted figures of Ebohon's headquarters. Both leaders have a commanding presence and relish speaking of their battles with adversarial forces, seen and unseen. A few days previously, a group of Jehovah's Witnesses had come to challenge Ebohon at his gate. He had to call the police to remove them. Idahosa speaks widely, both in Nigeria and internationally, of the underworld and satanic forces, now in retreat because of the power of Jesus.

The experience of Benin City and Nigeria aside, the concept of power has been identified by many as central to the religious experience (see, for example, Lewis 1986; van der Leeuw 1963; Chidester 1988), and one which also springs from indigenous discourse and interpretation. The advantage (and challenge) of the concept of power is that it belongs both to the object of study and its analysis (Brenner 1989: 87). It is also a concept which lends itself to interdisciplinary analysis, an important trend in scholarship generally (i. e., C. Geertz 1983), and one which is inherent to religious studies, but in need of reexamination and expansion. For example, the field of oral literature has much to contribute to the study of religion, especially in those areas dominated by or founded upon oral traditions, as is the case for Africa (Barber 1990: 313—337). In the African context, it constitutes an anathema to decon-

textualize religion given the integrated place "religion" has always held in "traditional", precolonial societies and the close ties which still exist in postcolonial societies between religion and politics, the economy, social behavior, and artistic expression, for example. Africa may be low on the list of Western priorities, strategically, politically and economically speaking, but the religious and cultural domains remain fertile areas for global and local interaction. The concept of power is a valuable heuristic tool for highlighting these relationships.

However, my concern here is to examine the discourse about power and its supporting signs more specifically among religious groups in contemporary Nigeria (with some reference to Ghana) and the ways in which that power is perceived, represented and experienced.[3] The contemporary urban African scene offers an enviable stage for a glimpse of the power relationships and conflicts and varied power sources which have come to characterize religious discourse in the region. Both Ghana and Nigeria display what Ali Mazrui calls "Africa's triple heritage." Islam and Christianity have established strong footholds in the region, with Islam having a slight edge over Christianity (although statistics are hard to come by) in Nigeria, while in Ghana Christianity is a much stronger presence. In both areas, traditional religions have suffered decline (but not demise) because of the expansion of Christianity and Islam and because of modernization.

I am less concerned in this essay with the way religious power is related to social action, i. e. what statements of religious power reveal about ideology or struggles for political and social action. This is, of course, a matter of central concern to scholars of religion in South Africa (Prozesky 1990). In the Yoruba context, Apter is concerned with the links between political power and ritual power (Apter 1987), and Barber is interested in how statements of power and ritual performances enter into the construction of personal power and communal solidarity (Barber 1991: 4).

I propose first to draw up an inventory of the key elements of this discourse of power and then to identify the configurations of elements which emerge from the context. I shall then consider the relative

importance attached to these elements and then conclude by examining how the various elements or signs are strategically organized and relate to each other in time and space.

1. Elements of power

One of the key elements is the content of the discourse itself and the way in which the discourse is presented. Whether focusing on the power of the ancients, the ancestors, the saints, Jesus Christ, Allah or the metaphysical self, religious specialists propound and expound the sources of their power, as well as qualifications for access to and enjoyment of its benefits. Spiritual power (some would say all power possessed or potentially possessible by humans) is held to derive from an external source, generally perceived as God, although evil and/or impersonal forces may be invoked. Power is generally understood as the ability to transcend the normal course of events, to possess knowledge beyond human ken, to be able to effect the miraculous, to possess spiritual gifts which may be beneficial to the individual or the community, ward off the harmful forces or adversaries ("The greatness of the name of the Lord is your prayer weapon"), and the ability to realize life's objectives – raise a family, enjoy economic self-sufficiency and good health. Mensa Otabil talks of the power of the right relationship with God – "your heavenly Father will not withhold any good gift from you."[4] Among the Yoruba, for instance, there is not much distinction made between spiritual and other forms of power. Economic, political and social power, the power to influence and change things, may often be attributed to religion. Muslims and evangelical and charismatic Christians would similarly interpret economic power as a sign of God's blessings. References to the Supreme Being as *Olorun Alagbara* ('God the Powerful One') have increased in difficult economic times, so has the prayer – *Fun wa ni agbara* ('give us power'), now

heard in both spiritual and mainline churches. People are supplicating God for the power to conquer their enemies and overcome trouble.

The tone of the discourse is also significant; it is frequently triumphalist — language of fire, victory, battles, darkness vs. light, militancy, sheer force of numbers. Physical signs may accompany utterances: laying on of hands, hitting on the head for special prayers (a characteristic trait of the Brotherhood of the Cross and Star and its leader, O. O. Obu). The volume may also be expressive of power — shouting the name of Jesus is believed to have an apotropaic effect. The clarity of the voice and ability to reach large numbers of people are significant factors. The ability to perform well whether on television or at crusades and revivals is crucial to the development of charisma. The discourse is presented both in oral and written form, the interplay between which, and significance of each, deserve more discussion than is possible here. Suffice it to say that owing to the strength of oral traditions in Africa, performance and skilled oratory are vital aspects of the message of power.

Other symbols of power may accompany the discourse, such as prayer for example. Many of the independent spiritual churches in western Nigeria are known as "Aladura" churches or "owners of prayer," owing to their belief that prayer can solve all problems. Prayer sessions in the fast-growing pentecostal/charismatic churches may be lengthy, extemporaneous and highly charged. Through the power of collective prayer at mass gatherings, healing miracles are seen to occur. Divinatory powers have always been revered in all types of traditional societies, including African, and so it is not surprising that many of the spiritual churches have continued the practice of visionary analysis of past and present events and prediction of future occurrences. Spiritual churches such as the Evangelical Church of Yahweh (Ọlabayọ), and the Celestial Church of Christ, for example, derive much of their reputation from their ability to discern past and future events. One man that I interviewed in the 1970s admitted that he had joined the latter church on the basis of what a prophet had been able to tell him (the supplicant) about events in his life in 1948. The denunciation of

this form of spiritual power by the mainline churches encourages Nicodemus-like behavior. Alternatively, people may be drawn to the occult organizations, such as the Rosicrucians, whose claims to possess the power of esoteric knowledge and master the forces of the universe frequently appear in the national dailies. Muslim *mallams* also develop reputations and draw in non-Muslim clients by virtue of their divinatory powers. Through the power of faith, prayer and the Holy Spirit ("spiritual perception"), pentecostal and charismatic tracts claim, the Devil's wiles may be known and defeated (Akano, n.d.: 14).

In the "spirit-filled churches" possession and glossolalia are powerful signs of the Spirit's presence, and may serve to confer authority on those within the group. Conversely, the power to exorcise unwanted, harmful spirits is a coveted skill and service; it may attract a casual clientele. For example, the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International in Jos, northern Nigeria, holds exorcism sessions every Tuesday (information from Jeremy Hinds, 9 July 1991), while others incorporate it into their healing services. Some organizations explicitly bill themselves as "deliverance ministries", such as the Faith and Works Deliverance Ministries in Calabar. The Brotherhood of the Cross and Star in Calabar dispatches teams of prophets to "spiritually cleanse" homes plagued by evil spirits. "Power evangelism" features increasingly in the discourse of many churches, notably those of a pentecostalist or evangelical orientation. It connotes scale, intensity and outreach and serves to mobilize God's army to direct their energies toward the all-important business of soul-winning. The mention of "endtimes" adds a sense of urgency, influenced by varying degrees of millennialist eschatology. Many organizations are training and sending missionaries to work in northern Muslim areas or neighboring African states, and now even to the United States, Europe, India and South East Asia.[5] The field for conversion and renewal is virtually endless when the "saved" are few and the "unsaved" (including nominal Christians) are many.

In the African context music is held to be an important sign of spiritual power. Music of spiritual origins, "the sweet sound of angels,"

may have the capacity to empower ritual and induce the forces of light to abound. The Celestial Church of Christ and the Brotherhood of the Cross and Star take a pride in their music and its commercial production and distribution. In all the urban markets of southern Ghana and Nigeria, the strains of gospel music compete to fill the air from the various music shops and stands. "Gospel Power Pills: Ono Na Obeye" by Kwame Wusu and Kuuku Sam is a popular tape in Ghana. The gospel music market has developed an economic potency through its popularity. Chief Ebenezer Obey, the internationally famous Nigerian musician, is now a major exponent of Yoruba gospel music. Just as the voice of the blind Swahili gospel singer, Mary Atieno, drew me irresistibly into a Mombasa gospel store in Kenya, music has the power to persuade, to influence, to lure people to reconsider their "dead Christianity" or their dissolute and deviant ways.

Biblical literacy has always been viewed as a powerful tool of evangelism in the Christian tradition. The newer Christian groups operating in West Africa today have exploited the mandate to disseminate the Word of God through the prolific output of inspirational literature, whether tracts, booklets, or conversion narratives. The proportion of indigenous production in relation to imported materials continues to grow. Some organizations, such as the Brotherhood of the Cross and Star, have their own printing presses and publishing houses. The written word is increasingly being eclipsed by the broadcast media as the most powerful and effective tool of mass evangelism. Radio, television and cassette ministries are the hallmark of the more successful and newer groups, connoting their intentionality, and also their economic power to purchase airtime.

Ritual objects of power abound, whether talismans, crosses, prayer rods (the latter are characteristic of the Cherubim and Seraphim movement). These may be integral parts of the ritual or personal items of empowerment which can be purchased in the market, through traditional healers or through mail orders. AMORC (the Ancient and Mystical Order of the Rosae Crucis) has a comprehensive catalogue and De Lawrence of Chicago is an important central source of esoteric

literature and paraphernalia, tapped into by many local healers and diviners. Uniforms, garments, prayer sashes and vestments both symbolize and provide power. The "white garment churches" (the spiritual or Aladura churches) are so named because of their white soutanes, which they wear to provide ritual protection (on the church premises and occasionally on road journeys or at work) and to create a ritual environment conducive to positive spiritual forces. Western-style dress, particularly of the glamorous or expensive variety, may serve to signify links with overseas bodies, although this is a negotiable sign since many Ghanaians would argue that they have adopted (and adapted) Western dress into their own modes and codes of dress. Adornments such as gold rings and watches or other forms of jewelry serve to create an impression of affluence and wealth. The Kristo Asafo Company in the Central Region of Ghana is renowned for its displays of affluence at its conventions.

Land has always been a symbol of status in precolonial African societies. Together with the growing symbolic importance of religious buildings, it is now common for a religious collectivity to direct much of its energies and fund-raising toward the erection of impressive structures. Again, such structures may serve to identify sources of overseas funding, whether from Muslim leaders such as Muammar Qaddafi or Christian evangelists such as Oral Roberts. Likewise the family is an important statement of success, whether the nuclear unit (as when the wife and children appear in publicity material) or the wider family connections (as in the case of Olubi Johnson who runs Scripture Pasture in Ibadan). Particularly in those churches which are influenced by American values and structures, the family is paraded as the paradigm of social and moral transformation. The family property is an extension of the church space as is well illustrated in Benin City by the impressive home, known as the "Lord's Faith Mansion" of Archbishop Benson Idahosa, founder of the Church of God Mission International.

Other indicators of power are educational qualifications, linguistic ability, frequent travel, entourage, highly placed political and business

associates. The ability to raise large sums of money or to give them out (for charity or scholarships) are statements of power. But perhaps one of the most widely recognized symbols of power is the car or vehicles owned by the leader or organization. In Nigeria especially, the car is a status symbol, in particular, the Mercedes Benz. In keeping with their clientele, the newer pentecostal and charismatic churches sell car stickers in their bookstores: "Power belongs to God" reads one Christian Faith Action Ministries version in Accra. In both Ghana and Nigeria, such victory stickers and badges abound and commonly adorn the desks of the faithful in their workplaces.

2. Configurations of power

It is possible to discern configurations of elements from among the many signs of power listed above. For example, healing, in its fullest sense, is central to the message and activities of many religious organizations. It is what lay behind the secession and creation of independent Christian movements in the 1920s and what continues to draw people to revivals and crusades. Miraculous cures or a sustained success rate guarantee a movement's survival and expansion. Even some enterprising Muslims have established healing compounds around Ibadan which bear a strong resemblance to those of Aladura prophets. Many of the Aladura and spiritual churches have designated ritual areas of special power, "mercy lands" and hilltops. Special healing needs may be met at auspicious times.

Closely overlapping the prayers and rituals of healing, is the concern for deliverance and protection. In a world believed to be peopled by evil and troublesome spirits, epitomized by many in the form of Satan, the quest for protection and liberation from such powers is an overriding activity. The power to identify, take on, neutralize or banish harmful, occult forces is highly lauded and discussed. By externalizing

the causes of failures and problems as "spiritual obstacles," the need for a discourse centered on spiritual power — a power akin to but greater than that of the enemy — is sustained. Demonic forces must be challenged by angelic forces, the Holy Spirit is more than a match for the Devil.

Once the spiritual barriers to the realization of self, family, nation are removed, then the blessings of the good life are showered upon the faithful. The promise of prosperity is on the lips of many evangelists and religious leaders in these hard economic times. Some seek every opportunity to manifest the signs of prosperity, whether in a ritual, public or domestic context.

The combination of the importance of the family in traditional African life together with the emphasis brought by conservative evangelical Christianity has resulted in a grounding of much of the more recent Christian discourse in family life. In other words, the idea is propagated that the healthy, happy, holy family is the empowering social institution par excellence, and one which is divinely ordained. It is a more nuclear (monogamous), exclusive notion of community, whose parameters must necessarily exclude those who might disempower the unit. Christian bookstores carry shelves of books and video and audio tapes on family life; marriage seminars are also a regular feature of retreats staged by such organizations as the Deeper Life Bible Church and the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International.

Closely linked to the family idiom is the role of women. They are held up as foundational to family life, but increasingly their spiritual equality and contributions to evangelism are receiving greater prominence in many churches. Ambivalent attitudes still remain towards women's spiritual powers, and their virtues, vices and vulnerability to evil forces commonly provide the material for sermons and inspirational literature.[6] Women's assertion of their own powers is more implicitly stated in the churches and ministries they found and the tracts and newspaper and magazine articles they now produce. Good examples of this are the Jesus Women's Prayer Fellowship, a nondenominational prayer ministry founded by Eunice Osagedie in Benin City,[7] the writings

of Dr. Ebele Eko, a well-known evangelist in south-eastern Nigeria and the magazine, *The Virtuous Woman*, founded and run by a group of university women in Ife who belong to an association known as the Nigerian Women for Christ (Hackett forthcoming). Some would say that women's powers have never been in question, as evidenced by their ritual authority in precolonial societies (Hackett 1992), but the effects of Westernization and mission Christianity have undermined this authority with new values and structures.

The relationship of the various religious groups to political power is also a delicate issue, as in both Ghana and Nigeria there is no established religion. Religious institutions walk a fine line between noninvolvement, nonalignment and concern for change, as well as meeting government demands for utilitarian commitment. Some religious groups such as Islam and the mainline Christian churches have been more successful in negotiating and manipulating the political arena (although Usman 1987, makes a strong case for the converse). The decision by the Nigerian government in the 1980s to join the Organization of Islamic Conference sparked off a major controversy. Since then, Christian groups, despite their wariness of political involvement following the Nigerian civil war in 1967—1970, have developed a more political stance, notably through CAN, the Christian Association of Nigeria. As economic conditions worsen and, in both Ghana and Nigeria, people flex their political muscles in the run-up to new political orders, prayers, sermons and addresses increasingly reflect concerns about the abuse of political power and the need for moral leadership.

3. Evaluating the powers that be

Amid the host of signs that constitute the discourse about power there is an ordering and hierarchization of elements. This is already suggested in the selection process, but it assumes greater significance in the

positive or negative evaluations attributed to the various expressions of power. Often these evaluations are predicated upon the origins of power, the power source – whether God, Allah, Jesus, Holy Spirit, St. Michael, Satan, Shango or the Word of God, and the authenticity of the claims. A common claim is that appearances deceive – the Devil is capable of many disguises, water spirits can be mistaken for the Holy Spirit. Traditional healers are not just engaged in herbalism. Certain powers are feared; for example, many Christians fear traditional powers and by extension, evangelical and pentecostal Christians fear the earlier spiritual or Aladura churches because they reportedly incorporate traditional practices (popularly referred to as "juju") into their liturgy. The Celestial Church of Christ is always trying to assert that their famous "green water" used for special healing purposes is not a dangerous, magical concoction. The founder and leader of the Brotherhood of the Cross and Star in Calabar has taken me around his house and church on at least two occasions, leaving no stone unturned to demonstrate that he does not resort to other powers (such as *ekpinon*, a form of witchcraft prevalent in the area, which can be purchased to enhance power). The Guru Mahara Ji, founder of a new movement of national proportions based upon Hindu teachings (unknown to the majority of Nigerians), is greatly feared by many and a common target of the popular press. Many churches ban their members from dealings with occult and metaphysical organizations such as the Grail Message or the Rosicrucians.

The ability to communicate with or to mediate the source of power laid claim to are important considerations in the evaluation of power and charisma by followers. Revelation, through dreams or visions, is a common mechanism in the more spiritually oriented churches, and one which allows for reinterpretation and transformation of preexistent patterns. In other churches it may be reliable scriptural interpretation or faithful replication of tradition. It is not always innovation which serves to endorse power claims. In those organizations whose discourse is predominantly centered on power, it is results that count: healing, problem-solving, exorcism, protection. Mobility and eclectic behavior

are common as people measure results against expectations (See Hackett 1989, chapter 10 for a discussion of conversion and affiliational and associational mobility). Lifestyles and moral rectitude of religious leaders are held up as evidence of "anointing" or "blessing." People believe they can partake of the blessings in a congregation led by a "Man of God." The converse may occur, such as in the case of the Celestial Church of Christ. Certain factions challenged the spiritual power and authority of A. A. Bada to succeed the Pastor-Founder, Rev. S. B. J. Oschoffa, at his death in October 1985. Legal suits are still pending and schisms have resulted. No one doubts Bada's ability to manage the church (he was previously a brewery manager), but his charismatic authority and his capacity to ensure the continuity of the church's miraculous powers have been seriously questioned. This serves to underline the primacy of spiritual over other forms of power.

Alternatively an aura of power can be generated by the complexity and breadth of cultic knowledge — the ability to manipulate ritual objects and recite magical formulae, gain access to esoteric knowledge, and produce herbal remedies. Professor R. A. Oyetunde, better known as Chief Kowee, a well-known traditional healer in the Ogbomosho area of Nigeria, prominently advertises his diverse power sources at his compound: "India-power" (through his membership in the "World Famous Ancient Messiah Brotherhood Lodge" of Durga-Dutt, Delhi, India), "Black Power" (Ancient Egyptian Magic through AMORC), "Saudi Arabia Power" (he uses the Qur'an). He also uses general magical paraphernalia, such as prayer candles which he used to obtain from his De Lawrence of Chicago catalogue, as well as the Bible (he particularly showed me the illustration in his Bible of Moses turning his staff into a snake) and the *Sixth and seventh books of Moses.* Chief Osemwegie Ebohon of Benin City claims to have been initiated into over seventy different cults, in addition to his primary affiliation, that of Olokun, a divinity of the sea. He also claims expertise in witchcraft and to have organized a World Conference of Witches in 1983. His compound, with its many shrines and numerous ritual objects is a symbolic representation of this ritual, esoteric complexity. Against this very complexity, Chris-

tian evangelists laud the simplicity of Bible and Savior. The ability to control or transcend natural phenomena is much admired among several groups. The area representative of Eckankar (ECK or the Secret Science of Soul Travel – an eastern-related spiritual science movement of Californian origins), Benjamin Anyaeji, impresses his audiences both on television and at lectures with accounts of his rain-stopping powers and his past lives (Hackett 1989: 158). The Sole Spiritual Leader of the Brotherhood of the Cross and Star, O. O. Obu, is believed by his followers to be able to travel to other parts of Nigeria and the world, despite the fact that he has never left his headquarters since founding the movement in the late 1950s.[8]

The power to divine, to discern the future, to see beyond the normal course of events is a form of power much revered. Witness the popularity of astrology (mediated through diviners, books and newspapers), itinerant Muslim *mallams*, parapsychologists (whose annual predictions feature in the national dailies and who were the subject of a play by the Nigerian Nobel laureate, Wole Soyinka, entitled, *Requiem for a futurologist*) and more currently the predictions of the Church of Emmanuel.

International origins, links, associates, branches, publications, funding are important signs and sources of power. Mosques funded by Saudi Arabia, Christian evangelists trained in the United States, revelations from outer space, missions to India, Gabon and the Philippines are known to many. I have written of the process of internationalization that I saw occurring in Calabar religion (Hackett 1989: 342–344), and others have noted it elsewhere.[9] The earlier independent churches rejected Western powers and fought for religious self-determination. That achieved, they now want to replace unilateral with multilateral evangelism. The Celestial Church of Christ, founded in Dahomey in 1947 and now established as one of the leading Aladura churches in Nigeria, and with many branches in other West African states, has over eleven congregations in the United States, with branches in France, Germany and Britain. The newer movements feel the need to extend their spheres of power, and in the process legitimate and have verified

their own power claims,[10] and eventually appropriate new sources of power. International connections through world evangelism, satellite link-ups, astral projection, pilgrimage or international gospel music extravaganzas are on the increase, often reflected in the names of the organizations: the Cross of Christ World Ministry, Truth and Life Ministries International, General World Prayer Healing Home, etc.

Tapping into global sources of power is definitely a source of prestige and even the smaller religious groups are seeking lifelines, but it is the demographic aspect which makes the headlines. When crowds are drawn to particular prophets, movements or events, people are curious to know, to verify the rumors of new or revitalized power, to investigate new possibilities. Four or five thousand women who blocked the streets of a Benin City suburb when they held their annual seminar (March 1991) at their Jesus Women Prayer Band Ministry caused a significant stir. Their ability to sustain large numbers of members (exclusively women) and then to erect a suitably large building to accommodate their growth has intrigued outside observers. People in Calabar are still talking about the numbers who flocked to hear T. L. Osborn, the American pentecostal preacher, when he led a crusade in the town in 1976. Today in Nigeria and Ghana more generally, it is Reinhard Bonnke, Benny Hinn, and Oral Roberts who make the news and fill the stadia and assembly halls.

4. Power encounters and strategies in time and space

I have so far considered some of the elements in the discourse of power among religious groups in present-day Nigeria and Ghana, the clustering of these elements and indigenous responses to and critiques of the claims to power. It is possible to discern greater weight being given to

some signs of power for reasons of tradition or current socio-economic circumstances. In this final section it remains to look even more broadly at the discourse and its logic and purpose.

As has been implied, the discourse of power is not new to the West African context, but I have argued that the frequency and intensity of signs of power and their articulation have increased in recent times due to a number of factors, namely religious freedom, religious pluralization, difficult political and economic conditions, improved mass communications technology and the wave of evangelical/pentecostal/charismatic movements. I have not wanted to suggest that all groups or individuals are actively engaged in or drawn to this type of discourse, but I am maintaining that they cannot fail to be influenced by it in some way.

One of the most notable features of the discourse in general is the marshalling and manipulation of resources and signs of self and other, in order to build a case for and against – why you should avail yourself of my power and not of the opposition. To establish veracity and efficacy a variety of techniques are employed, many of which reflect the multimedia aspect of religion today. The choice of techniques will depend upon the audience and outreach, and perceived universality of the message. Questioning alternative religious choices on the basis of power (wrong sort or poor results) serves to bolster and enhance their own image. This is done in a variety of contexts, chiefly the medium of the television broadcast or video, the sermon (referring to the others as "dead churches" or as the Yoruba say, "*ijọ ara*" or "churches of the flesh"), the testimony ("How I Overcame Satan"), the revival (Deeper Life Bible Church's nationwide "Power of the Blood of Jesus Christ"), literature (Eni) or through gossip.[11] It is common for claims and counter-claims to center on the question of fullness (Full Gospel), incompleteness (absence of the Holy Spirit), hiddenness ([re]discovery of lost or earlier powers/miracles), unnecessary additives (occult, "pagan", charismatic). This may also be reflected in self-designation, viz. Sole Spiritual Head, "the Creator has Manifested," "last boat to salvation," "last prophet." The creative manipulation of the time factor is also important in establishing dominance and dismissing the opposition, whether by reference to the past (ancestors, forefathers, tradition,

saints), the here and now — instant miracles, blessings (miracle centers everywhere), future (a Christ Apostolic Church revival which promises blessings in 36 hours), progressive, keeping up with the times, endtimes, Second Coming, revolutionary ideals, realization of Islamic states or born-again nations.

The texts and devices employed by some of the leading preachers in constructing and legitimating their own power as well as being a source for others bear examining in more detail. Reverend Gabriel Oduyẹmi, founder of Bethel International Ministries in Lagos, delivered a powerful sermon to a congregation of several thousand at the Christian Faith Action Ministries in Accra.[12] Appearing in "gorgeous robes" he began with an emotional depiction of his rise from rags to riches, or how he became a multimillionaire industrialist-turned-evangelist, dropping out figures of several million dollars in cuts and profits. We had been previously primed as to his palatial home and James Bond car. Then he changed his focus to his listeners, promising them that "God is going to change your life ... There is going to be a U-turn in your life." He goes on:

> You are entitled to the best because of the blood of Jesus Christ of Nazareth son of the living God. No government can put you down, no situation can defeat you, the Devil has no power. And I am telling you, HE HAS NO POWER!!! Because he that lives inside of you is greater than he who is roaming the world.

To the background of an electronic organ he starts to exhort and admonish the congregation: "The time of 'playing church' has gone. People are tired of sermons. They want to see the manifestation of the *POWER* of God." From time to time he asks people to read a relevant Bible passage, chiding and mocking those who do not have a Bible in their possession. He then begins to relate the power of God to wider changes: "When people know Jesus, there is going to be a performance (*sic*) in the government, the economy is going to be revived ..." Oduyẹmi then introduces a note of urgency into his discourse that we are in the endtime and that the time has come to "let the Devil know

you are going to stop playing church." He vehemently insists on the need for a new anointing, an "oil change," to be part of God's plan. He then begins to fuel the anticipation of his audience by vigorously informing them that "You are going to feel some new anointing, some new *power* like you have never experienced before because the Holy Spirit of God is going to sweep over God's people." He turns up the volume even further by shouting:

> The new anointing is coming, is coming. Yes, it's coming, it's coming, it's coming. Yes, I'm going to release the new anointing by the power of the Holy Spirit of God. Now be ready, now be ready, now be ready. Holy Ghost be ready, be ready, be ready, it's coming. Now take this new anointing. Take it, take the new anointing.

By this time he is screaming uncontrollably and starts blowing repeatedly into the microphone, symbolizing the power filling the room. He calls loudly, several times, "Give me volume!" He then starts speaking Hebrew, followed by shouts of "Jesus! Jesus! Let the anointing of your power fall upon your people in the name of Jesus, in the name of Jesus, in the name of Jesus!" Shouting even more loudly he addresses the crowd, "Take the anointing, take the anointing ... Take it, take it!!" He continues to blow into the microphone, interspersed with repeated cries of "Receive it, receive it ... Receive the anointing! Receive the fire of the Holy Spirit of God ... POWER, POWER, receive it." After a while, he calms down, asking for applause and then adding encouragingly, "I can see the spiritual limitations in many lives being lifted, believe me, you don't know the power that has fallen upon you." He continues to bolster his own authority as a seer and dispenser of power by offering, in closing, special prayers for businessmen and businesswomen, promising them lifted debts and "unbelievable prosperity."

In contrast to the imposing and aggressive delivery of Oduyẹmi, Rev. Dr. Mensa Otabil, who regularly preaches to four or five thousand people in his International Central Gospel Church in Accra, presents a figure of cool authority.[13] His discourse is nonetheless often centered

on power, the empowerment of a right relationship with God and right prayer: "It [prayer] transforms you. Prayer does not change God, but it changes you. It puts you in a position for God to work on you and for God to bless you." Otabil is skilled at developing a rapport with his congregation, asking them frequently, "Are you understanding that?" He frequently elicits laughter with his depictions of incompetent or ritualistic prayer (notably by "Pharisees" and "heathens"), especially with observations couched in Ghanaian English: "for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking!" His references to theological debates, etymologies and other religious traditions impress and excite his listeners and they respond with "Man you are teaching!" "Yeah, yeah!" "Alleluia!" "Thank you Lord!" From time to time they show their approval with collective shouts and applause. He judiciously blends Bible readings, extemporaneous song, "Great is Jehovah!", audience repetition, organ music, Hebrew names and expressions and Ghanaian turns of phrase and examples. Tall, handsome, educated and articulate, he cuts an impressive figure in his tasteful Ghanaian dress.

In a sermon that he preached on "The Mandate of the Gospel," the concept of power is central and expressed in militaristic and explosive language. Opening with a reading from Acts 1:4–8, he immediately launches into the discourse of power:

> The power of God is expressed through what is called the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. And so when we talk about the gospel we are talking about the God's power. Everybody say, POWER. Any time the gospel is preached or proclaimed the power of God is released. And the Bible says it is the power of God unto salvation or deliverance or rescuing. This power of God is not a passive power, it is a power which works to deliver and save.

Developing the message in verse 7, that "Ye shall receive power," as a mandate from the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel, he exploits to the full the Greek origins of the term power (*dynamis*):

> Now if you know what dynamite is you know that dynamite is not a passive power. When dynamite is put in a place it doesn't

> toy with a place. When dynamite is put into a rock, the rock must break. When dynamite is put into a hard situation the situation must break. He said you shall receive DYNAMITE after the Holy Ghost has come upon you ... For many of us we think that the coming of the Holy Spirit ... was just to speak in tongues. But the Holy Spirit baptism is more than tongues ... He said YOU SHALL RECEIVE *POWER*, not tongues.

The audience is by now shouting its approval. The excitement mounts as Otabil pursues the dynamite metaphor and introduces a hypothetical encounter with demonic forces:

> You may not see it physically but all the demons look at you and withdraw. They give you a safe distance. Because you had (*sic*) received *DYNAMITE*!!! ... As a matter of fact when you walk in the spiritual you are highly explosive. From that time you received the Holy Spirit you received the mandate to destroy the works of the Devil. You became like a DIVINE MERCENARY who was charged to dynamite the camp of the enemy ... I have good news for you, brothers and sisters, when you receive the Holy Ghost, the Devil is more afraid of you than you of him.

This notion of personal empowerment and spiritual protection forming a basis for defiance and destruction of the supernatural opposition is a common feature of the discourse more generally. Archbishop Benson Idahosa delighted his international audience at an Atlanta congress by regaling them with vivid and commanding descriptions:

> I took that power and authority and revelation and began to throw challenges to demons and powers of darkness that have held our people for years limitlessly. I said God if your kingdom can substitute and replace the kingdom of darkness, give me that power [he hits the microphone] not to harass the Devil but to cast him out!!! ... And I heard Him say he's yours!! (Sermon at the World Congress on the Kingdom of God, Atlanta, 30 October 1990).

Referring to the Chapel Hill Harvester Church where he was preaching in Atlanta, he goes on:

> When the Devil was in charge of this place most of the members lived on welfare; now that the church is no longer living under the Devil's oppression she is now living by warfare! ... The church is now teaching people to get out of prayer-line and to enter power-line!

Exhorting the people to "Take over! Take over!", he further commands them to say "I have power now!" and "Devil, get out!" of their homes and countries, just as he claims to have successfully liberated Benin City, Bendel State and Nigeria.

Women too employ the language of power. Mrs. Olubi-Johnson, evangelist and wife of the founder of Scripture Pasture in Ibadan, speaking to a marriage seminar organized by the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship in Ile-Ife, Nigeria, tells her (born-again) audience forcefully: "You know you have victory! You have confidence you have victory!" (Talk recorded on audio-cassette, 31 May 1991). She exhorts people to become "prayer warriors" thereby generating power and destroying their enemies "in the name of Jesus!" She repeats the latter invocation numerous times to almost fever pitch and then invites equally powerful extemporaneous prayers.

On occasion, direct, physical encounters form the basis of the challenges to power. Ritual confrontations may occur among priests or diviners at festival time,[14] but public clashes in the street or the media are increasingly common. Archbishop Idahosa led an entourage to the gates of the Brotherhood of the Cross and Star in Calabar in 1990 to challenge the power of O.O. Obu. Back home he battled with armed robbers violating his domestic space (Benin City is widely considered to be a haven for hoodlums), emerging wounded yet victorious.[15] Early in 1991, and again in mid-October, there were serious Muslim-Christian riots in the north of Nigeria. The October riots were reportedly occasioned by Muslim reaction to a crusade of the German evangelist, Reinhard Bonnke. Muslim and Christian students clashed over the

proximity of each other's religious symbols at their respective places of worship on Ibadan University campus. The affair engaged national attention. Secret society masqueraders have engaged in frequent conflict with Christian groups in the Cross River region of Nigeria (Hackett 1989: 249–250). Witches clash with metaphysicians and Christians on the occasion of a meeting of world witches in Nigeria in 1983 (*Sunday Times* [Nigeria] 9 and 30 January 1983; cited in Ṣoyinka, 1985). An address by Kṛṣnapada, the director of all Hare Krishna operations in Africa, at the Department of Religious Studies, Ọbafẹmi Awolọwọ University, Ile-Ife, was disrupted by a group of Deeper Life Bible Church members in January last year (Salamone 1991). Kṛṣnapada himself later claimed that through his own powers he averted a major confrontation by causing them to leave the room.

Challenges to the power of others not only lead to self-aggrandizement but fuel the leadership disputes which lead to schism and regrowth. In other words, power is at the heart of the changing shape of the religious landscape. The genesis of many of Nigeria's new religious movements can be linked with challenges to power and authority of one sort or another (Wyllie 1985, documents a Ghanaian example; for Nigerian cases, see Hackett, 1987).

5. Conclusion

One of the important observations that emerges from this regional and thematic study, however incomplete, is evidence of a lively indigenous critique, i. e. critique of others' claims to power, sources of power, effectiveness of power, as well as defense of one's own powers. Means employed may be rational observation (i. e. excessive material power), spiritual revelation, theological arguments, empirical evidence (of witnesses, apostates, etc.), political challenges (leadership), challenges on the basis of gender.

The appeal of the discourse of and about religious power suggests its relevance to the lifestyles of many Ghanaians and Nigerians, perhaps even a challenge with its moral component to contemporary political discourse and economic injustice and its perpetrators. People are also encouraged by the idea being promulgated by a number of Christian religious leaders that Africa is a new arena for revival and the manifestation of God's power (MacDonald, n.d.). In the words of Archbishop Idahosa, "The same God that blessed America has His headquarter (*sic*) now in Africa and He has a branch in Atlanta" and "Africa that you thought was the headquarter (*sic*) of witchcraft is now the headquarter of redemption!" (Benson Idahosa, sermon at the World Congress on the Kingdom of God, 31 October 1990). At one level this may be seen, as stated earlier, as a positive interpretation of economic hardship, in that spiritual power and rediscovery are believed to emerge from lack of economic power and material wealth. Alternatively, the perceived specter of Islam may also serve as a stimulus to "power evangelism" for some religious groups. For others the turning of the tables is part of the African deconstruction of a Western hegemonic conspiracy, the discovery of hidden religious secrets, secrets concealed by colonial and missionary powers and which hold the key to long-overdue material security, well-being and redistribution of religious power.

Notes

1. I am grateful to all those who have offered comments on this paper, especially Kofi E. Agovi, Jacob K. Olupọna, Richard A. Ọlaniyan and Simon P. X. Battestini. This essay draws on the model employed by the latter who has provided valuable advice at all stages of the paper.
2. This debate is referred to in Lyons-Lyons (1987), which is an excellent analysis of the rise of Idahosa's "electronic church" and the relationship

between the message, the medium, the audience, the ritual and the socio-economic context.

3. An excellent, more general, yet very relevant, book in this regard is Arens-Karp which challenges more secularly based accounts of power and power relationships by emphasizing the cultural (particularly cosmological) basis of agency and the transformative, creative aspects of power compared to the more material view of western social science (1989: xxi). As stated by the editors, "[M]embers of these [African] societies assert that the source of power resides in the interaction between natural, social, and supernatural realms" (1989: xvii).
4. Rev. Dr. Mensa Otabil, "The Lord's Prayer [1]." Sermon preached at International Central Gospel Church, Accra, Ghana (n.d., [1991]). Available on cassette tape produced by International Central Gospel Church Tapes, P. O. Box 7933, Accra-North, Ghana.
5. It was estimated in 1986 that there were as many as 20,000 Protestant missionaries from the Third World (in addition to 67,000 from Europe and North America). See Wilson-Siewert, 1986: 19.
6. See especially an article by Kumuyi in his newspaper, *Deeper Life*, on "Backsliding" (vol. 2, no. 7 [February 1991]: 8) where he writes of the need to "flush out" all women "with undue influence in the Church, who are prayerless, ungodly and backslidden, but by their voice wield a lot of influence on pastors and other ministers." He cites at length Proverbs 2:16—19, "To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words." See also, Evangelist Victoria Eko's, *Exposition on water spirits* which details the perils of the (predominantly female) "mammy wata" spirits whose demonic allure is feared by all. Incidentally, she recommends a "heavy dose of the scriptures" as a means of retaining deliverance from water or marine spirits (1983: 57). Cf. also Isaacson with regard to recognition of female water spirits by Deeper Life members (1990: 202); one woman doctor in the church states "women seem more born into the spirit world, mother to daughter. Women seem to be in contact with the spirits more naturally than men. Pregnancies get tampered with a lot — the spirits seem to find women more vulnerable when pregnant" (1990: 195).
7. Other examples with which I am most familiar are Christianah Abiọdun Akinṣowọn (one of the co-founders of the Cherubim and Seraphim movement), Agnes Okoli or Mama Odozi-Obodo (Christ Holy Church), Theresa

T. A. Offiong (Holy Chapel of Miracles), Maddie Raymond (Mount Olive Church of Christ), Theresa S. U. Inyang (Church of God Lamentation of Jehovah) and more recently, Lady Evangelist Margaret Bọlanle Ọdẹleke (Christ Message Ministry) and Lady Evangelist Dorcas Ọlaniyi (Agbala Daniel).

8. This is frequently reported in Brotherhood newspapers, viz. "Olumba appears in the sun: And pays a visit to a school!" *Herald of the New Kingdom*, 27 April—4 May 1984.
9. See for example, Hastings where he writes of the reacquisition of American and European links by Ghanaian independent churches in the late 1960s onwards (1979: 179).
10. An intriguing example comes from the Brotherhood of the Cross and Star in a published interview with Professor Assassu Inyang Ibom, an esoteric associate of the movement and founder of the Esom Fraternity Company, where he claims that he and a German and an Indian associate have verified the divine status of the founder of the Brotherhood, O. O. Obu, through astral and terrestrial projection. They also claim that there will be a cosmic battle involving Hitler, but only those who are Brotherhood members will be saved through rapture. See *Just eleven years to go* (Calabar, 1988).
11. A. Geertz makes a convincing case for the importance of gossip in not only redefining the roles and identities of others, but also in defining the social identity of self (1992: Chapter 8).
12. Rev. Gabriel Oduyemi, "Who Shall Go?" Sermon preached at Christ Faith Action Ministries (CFAN), Accra, Ghana, 3 February 1991 and available on audio cassette from CFAN bookshop.
13. The following account is based upon my interview with Rev. Dr. Mensa Otabil in Accra on 27 February 1991 and on his sermon, "The Mandate of the Gospel", preached at International Central Gospel Church, Accra, Ghana (n.d. [1991]). Available on cassette tape produced by International Central Gospel Church Tapes, P. O. Box 7933, Accra-North, Ghana.
14. For example, Olupọna describes how medicine men of the Yoruba deity, Ogun, in Ondo, engage in public displays of their magical power and challenges to other *Ologun* at festival time (1991: 123).
15. See "Night of the dark marauders," *Redemption Faith Magazine* 5, 39 (1991): 8—9.

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Donald Wiebe

Religious studies as a saving grace? From Goodenough to South Africa

> *The history of religions, as I understand it, is a "saving" discipline.*
>
> Mircea Eliade

> *Religious studies ... should not only aim at understanding reality but also at transforming it.*
>
> Gregory Baum

> *The facts and analyses of Religionswissenschaft may become the raw material for a theologia naturalis or for any other philosophical, [socio-political], or religious system. But this is already outside the terms of reference of Religionswissenschaft and therefore no longer the concern of the student of religion.*
>
> R. J. Zwi Werblowsky

I will not in this paper concern myself in any direct fashion with the complex interrelationship between socio-political change and religious transformation in society at large. I shall give attention rather to methodological concerns that arise in the study of religions which of necessity must analyze the nature of such relationships. And to do that, I suggest, indirectly addresses our present theme for such methodological clarification will also involve analysis of a variety of claims about

the nature of the socio-political structures within which the academic study of religions takes place and of the implications of those claims regarding the relationship of such structures to religious transformations. Indeed, a fundamental question that arises in such methodological clarification is whether such socio-political structures are, willy nilly, involved with/in personal or social "religious transformations" or ought to be.

The official policy (and, for the most part, rhetoric) of departments for the study of religion in the academic setting is that this enterprise, like others in the university, is undertaken for cognitive/scientific reasons alone and not – at least not consciously and intentionally – as a means for the achievement of religious, cultural, political or other ends. As I have shown elsewhere, it was because of the adoption of precisely such a scientific agenda, clearly demarcated from religio-theological concerns, that the study of religion achieved the academic legitimation it sought from the university (Wiebe 1984).

Though this policy was not officially a part of the institutionalization of the academic study of religion in the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR) at its inception, it received formulation by R. J. Z. Werblowsky in a five point statement of "the basic minimum presuppositions" for the pursuit of historical and comparative studies of religion when the Association found many theological and religious matters appearing on the agenda of its periodic Congresses (Schimmel 1960). According to the Werblowsky statement, signed by a number of members of the IAHR, the academic student of religion assumes the enterprise s/he is undertaking is a scientific discipline which, even though it belongs to the humanities within the university structure, studies religious phenomena as empirical facts of human existence and history and not as embodiments of transcendent truth. That study, therefore, rejects the claim that religion is a *sui generis* phenomenon.[1] Furthermore, although admitting that the scholarly study of religion may first have emerged out of nonacademic motivation, it does not need such external justification and should, moreover, keep itself free of all ideological commitments.

Not all scholars who were involved in establishing, or reestablishing, the academic study of religion were necessarily in agreement with the assumption of a clear demarcation between the religious and the students of religion. Erwin Goodenough, for example, in his address to a group of American historians of religion who would soon form the American Society for the Study of Religion (ASSR), although demarcating the scientific study of religion from traditionalist and theological approaches, does not eschew the religious in coming to an understanding of the nature of the study of religions. "The hope of reviving study of the science of religion," he writes:

> lies ... not in courting the traditionalists and theologians, but in coming to recognize that science itself is a religious exercise, a new religion, and that science and religion have fallen apart largely because traditionalists have done what they have always done, failed to recognize a new approach to religion as it has formed itself in their midst, challenging thereby old conceptions and comfortably formulated adjustments (1959: 85).

He continued: "Historians — of religions, that is — must include in their study, and in their sympathy, the new religion of science, or of scientists, along with the religions and thought ways they have hitherto considered" (1959: 85). For Goodenough, religion is a matter of adjustment to "the universal reality," and science, like religion, seeks relationships and meaning in trying to find the principles inherent in its empirical data. That search for meaning in the facts is, he insists, "a new formulation of man's [and woman's] relation to the *tremendum*," and is, therefore, "a totally new form of religion itself" (1959: 90). Goodenough describes the new religion in succinct terms as follows:

> The new religion takes a new attitude toward the *tremendum*: It no longer hides its head, ostrich-fashion, in myths asserting that the *tremendum* is less perilous than it is; it no longer surrenders to the *tremendum*, and asks to be reabsorbed into it. Instead, refusing either to run away or surrender, it accepts the *tremendum*,

> and the individual's helplessness and insignificance before it. It drops no curtain, but faces the overwhelming within and without, while it seeks to find relationships and meaning as far as it can by its own method (1959: 90).

This spirit, he then argues, must also characterize the academic/scientific study of religion. As he puts it:

> we can hardly call ourselves scientists of religion if we systematically define religion so as to leave out this great approach to the *tremendum* going on all about us, and refuse ourselves to share in it ... [W]e [must] combine science and religion in our very marrow, combine them into a dedication to learning about religion by the slow dogged approach of science. I know no other way in which we can hope eventually to understand better the *homo religious*, religion itself, and avoid the agony Sanday felt when he killed in order to dissect. For if we still have to kill the old dream that religion is a matter of revelation, through *Religionswissenschaft* we may discover that the scalpel itself has become a sacramental instrument (1959: 91, 94–95).

The new institutional framework for the academic study of religion proposed by Goodenough, it is obvious, is not simply a neutral framework within which a peculiar kind of intellection can take place. Goodenough's proposal is, in fact, a call for radical socio-political changes in academic structures that will not only disenfranchise, so to speak, a particular kind of scholar but a call for socio-political changes that will also effect a religious transformation. Furthermore, the change of approach in the academic study of religion he seeks is itself necessitated, it appears, because of the broader influence of science on society in its generally corrosive effect on traditional modes of religious belief and existence.

Willard Oxtoby, in reviewing the development of the history of religions in America with particular focus on Goodenough's essay, quite rightly points out that Goodenough's version of scientific hu-

manism, like the new phenomenology of religion (1968: 599), and the dialogic approach to the study of religion taken up by many American scholars (1968: 603), makes of the science of religion "a religious exercise" which in turn makes it impossible to distinguish the study of religion from religion (1968: 607). Oxtoby conceded that Goodenough's thesis about science as a religious exercise was not likely to gather a very large following given that the majority of American scholars in the field were identified, happily or otherwise, with one of the traditional religious bodies in America and were more likely, therefore, to give emphasis to the notion of religious community rather than the philosophical interests given attention by Goodenough. However, despite the religious character of Goodenough's *Religionswissenschaft*, Oxtoby maintains that his essay delineating the nature of that study is "one of the important statements in the history of the discipline [which] ... enshrines points with which any discussion of scientific attitude in the study of religion must come to terms" (1968: 608). But the only reason he gives in support of that claim is that in Goodenough's position "there is a searching openness ... which goes beyond the sterile isolationism and externalism of Werblowsky's Marburg platform" (1968: 605). Although Goodenough tried to bring to *Religionswissenschaft* a scientific attitude which had been denied it, in his view, by theologians, he himself appears to have no less undermined it by attempting to go beyond the assumptions adopted by other university disciplines. This is especially surprising given that Goodenough himself was one of the signatories to the Werblowsky "manifesto." Indeed, in Oxtoby's analysis, Goodenough is no less guilty of this than are the phenomenologists and those espousing a dialogical approach to the study of religions whom he clearly sees as being unscientific (1968: 598). It is difficult, therefore, to take Oxtoby's claim about Goodenough's methodological importance seriously. Whereas Oxtoby, his disclaimer notwithstanding, denigrates Werblowsky's concern to distinguish between religion and the study of religion as being sterile he, nevertheless, also recognizes that Werblowsky's admission that there is a kind of sterility about the purely academic concern for the understanding of religions is but one

element of an argument to the end that without such sterility the academic study of religion would be ruinously *infected* with religion (1968: 605 and n. 1). Oxtoby's claim, therefore, that Goodenough's essay on *Religionswissenschaft* is an oracle is, I think, true but his insistence that it is one "which we do well to visit now and again" (1968: 608), is quite unacceptable. Students of religion ought not, simply put, to consult oracles: to do so will simply draw us back again into the furor of interreligious conflict, and it is that which the *academic* study of religion was invoked to transcend. I shall elaborate but briefly on the matter of a renewed interreligious conflict within the academy.

Goodenough, as Oxtoby notes, lamented the fact that *Religionswissenschaft* was ignored by his fellow scientists in the university. It is not, however, difficult to understand why this was so and especially so in the American academic context. In a country in which the constitution insists on a clear separation of "church and state," a study of religion in this vein within a public university is really little more than the teaching of religion with the support of the state. It is, moreover, the privileging of a particular — although relatively new — religion over against the established traditions and is bound to create conflict not only between the religious and the secularists but also amongst the religious themselves. Some traditionalists have echoed the complaint of the secularists, for example, that departments of religion are really nothing but havens for the propagation of a new religion, as can be seen in Randy Huntsberry's, "Secular education and its religion." The academic study of religion, Huntsberry argues, has spawned an interest in what he calls "generic religion," which stands as a direct challenge to the historical religious traditions that are constitutionally excluded from the classroom. "Teaching 'about' religion," he writes, "has become the teaching 'of' religion. We are messiahs whether we like it or not."[2] R. Michaelson similarly points out that much of the so-called academic study of religion has fostered the creation of a "classroom religion" (Michaelson 1972). And Robert Bellah, in his "Confessions of a former establishment fundamentalist," not only admits as much but advocates it. He maintains that the professor of religion ought, in fact, "to stir

up the students' unconscious religious depths ... [and] to get the students to face the religious dimension of existence directly," since no religion scholar ever remains aloof from religious commitment, or its equivalent, anyway (1970: 4). According to Bellah, even the most objectively oriented student of religion has adopted a fundamental (ultimate) stance that is structurally indistinguishable from religious commitment in assuming that one's own "allegedly scientific concepts [have] a higher ontological status than the religious realm [being] studied" (1970: 3). Bellah, therefore, has no compunction about blurring the boundary between religion and the study of religion either in his research or teaching as can be clearly seen in his espousal of symbolic realism as doctrine and as methodological framework for his thought.[3]

In his *Journal* for 2 March 1967, Mircea Eliade, also a signatory to the Werblowsky "manifesto", noted that: "The history of religions, as I understand it, is a 'saving' discipline" (1977: 296). A little more than a year later (21 April 1968) he wrote: "Very interesting, this remark of Fingarette: 'In psychoanalysis Freud brought into the most intimate partnership, a science of human change and the art of self-liberation.' ... I attribute a similar function as well to the history of religions" (1977: 309–310). It is obvious, from even the very brief review of the literature provided here, that Eliade is not the only scholar who has desired scientific legitimation for his work even though it is essentially emancipatory in character. This, however, is very much like wanting to eat one's cake and have it too. To take up an emancipatory or salvific task, as Kurt Rudolph – amongst others – has clearly shown with regard to Eliade's work, has required abandoning *Religionswissenschaft* as a scientific discipline. As Rudolph puts it: "[Eliade] attempts to tie the history of religions to a programme that would not only rob it of a firm basis in philology and history but would also bind it to a one-sided view of humanity and the world, to the narrow view of a romantic crypto-religious vision that cannot be harmonized with the discipline's aspirations to universality and with its critical distance as a science" (1989: 109). Eliade's approach to the study of religion, therefore, makes of it nothing more than "a kind of personal confession" that is bound

to clash with the confessions of others that differ (Rudolph 1989: 115). And that, obviously, would be simply to dismantle the work of those students of religion who achieved academic legitimation for this field of research by means of the creation of a methodological framework that allowed them to transcend this kind of interreligious wrangling. The study of religion, if it is to survive as an academic and scientific undertaking, therefore, is in need of being saved from becoming a salvific undertaking. Unlike J. Neusner, who argues in Eliadean vein for "religious studies" as our next vocation (i. e., as a task *beyond* the scientific study of religions), it is essential that we see that the science of religion is our only *academic* vocation. A brief look at the contradictions Neusner falls into should make that incontrovertibly clear.

In "Religious studies: The next vocation," Neusner maintains that having transcended the framework of the religious by the study of religion and having created, thereby, an academic study of religions, it is necessary for us now to move beyond that new enterprise into "religious studies" if we are really to fulfill the academic mandate. Neusner's "argument" here is reminiscent of Ricoeur's claims that the intention of the critical thought in which we transcended our original naiveté can only be fulfilled if we now move beyond it into a "second naiveté"; and it is equally unpersuasive. Neusner admits that the academic study of religion came into being by ridding itself of "empty-headed preachers, pastors, and rabbis," and by "making a place for people who could teach and with a measure of detachment and objectivity take up the tasks of interpretation" (1977: 117). But he also immediately complains of the "rather technical and desiccated way in which we have made religious studies into a tolerable science." "What has happened," he writes, "is that religious studies have ceased to raise those central issues which are addressed in the humanities. We have moved too far toward the pretense that there is a science of religions, even adopting the jargon and obfuscation of pseudo-sciences" and that it is now time "to turn our attention once more to the critical exposition of the central issues of religiosity; to the questions raised and answered both in diverse historical religions and by our students here and now"

(1977: 119). It is our duty, he insists, "to tell them that it is in religions that humanity has asked its basic questions about making the world fit for them who are in God's image and made in God's likeness" (1977: 120), for only then will they and we "measure and shape our own capacity to transcend our small and limited selves." That in doing this we take up again the tasks of our "empty-headed" predecessors presents no problem for, according to Neusner, "the preachers, pastors, and rabbis of the 1950s, and ... the freaks and crackpots of the early 1970s" never lost sight of what is most important, "the human [salvific?] dimension of religions" (1977: 119).

Many students of religion have not only objected to drawing a clear line of demarcation between religion and the academic study of religion but have also refused to countenance any clear distinction between the study of religion and political action. David Chidester, for example, in his "Religious studies as political practice," argues that the central approach to the understanding of religious phenomena is to be found in the phenomenology of religion and he maintains that there is an inherent political activity of nonviolence in such a phenomenology. Consequently, as a political practice, "religious studies refuses to deny the humanity of even those who deny the full humanity of others" (Chidester 1987: 17). In so far as the phenomenology of religion uncovers the fact of the religiously pluralistic nature of South African society and therefore undermines state propaganda that, as Chidester argues, suggests that the country is a "Christian Nation," it might make some sense to say that the phenomenology of religion is "implicitly political." That, however, is not to say that it is essentially a political undertaking nor does it justify the claim that it ought to be. Chidester, however, suggests that because of that implicitly political character (effect) of the phenomenology of religion in South Africa we ought to see that the political task of the academic study of religion is the criticism "of all private ownership of the sacred" (Chidester 1987: 17). His "argument," however, is not persuasive — indeed, it is less argument than it is announcement. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that he almost immediately mutes his claim in saying that "[t]his political

practice does not begin with the announcement of a political programme, but ... has already begun in the disciplined, academic, plural study of religion and religions" (1987: 17). Nor does Chidester elaborate on the constructive political program he thinks students of religion ought to take up. His colleague, Martin Prozesky, however, does.

Martin Prozesky's essay evaluating "South Africa's contribution to religious studies" presents a much more expansive notion of the political responsibilities of the academic study of religion. In speaking about doing religious studies in the political climate in South Africa he writes:

> Amidst all this [political oppression], Religious Studies in our context will damn itself ... if it imagines that all it must do is document, analyze, interpret, and explain the reality of religions in South Africa, for the situation cries out for something more. It cries out for *a new ethic of religions, a new, creatively critical interrogation of religion in relation to both socio-personal liberation and oppression* ... [T]he field [of religious studies] cannot now be credibly studied without prioritizing the problem of religions in the struggle for a more humane world order in general, and in the apartheid state in particular (1990: 10—11).

For Prozesky, moreover, this socio-political concern can only be properly undertaken if the concern with personal religious well-being is an essential aspect of the study of religion. He writes: "Lest these sentiments make it seem that I view religion as no more than a socio-personal reality, as no more than a mode of being human, let me add that in South Africa as anywhere else, the central claim of religion to reveal to us the ultimate and deepest truth and to relate us beneficially to it, is in its own right a profoundly absorbing and important matter" (1990: 11). The contribution he believes South African students of religion can make to the discipline, therefore, is the development of the subject "as a significant, humanizing force in the context of the struggle for a post-apartheid society *by problematizing religion as a socio-personal force*" (1990: 18). This will require that students of religion develop "a genuinely liberative praxis in South Africa." Recognizing

the human suffering in which their research and teaching take place, he insists, forces us also to recognize "that the one thing our work cannot be is apolitical," and that we must join in "moral allegiance with other forces working to humanize South Africa, without compromising our duty to remain critically independent" (1990: 17).

Unfortunately, other than relying on our ethical sensibilities, Prozesky here merely states the case for a politics of religious studies but does not present a convincing epistemological or methodological argument for his proposal. His paper to XVIth IAHR Congress on "Proposals for a criteriology of religion, with special reference to religion in South Africa" attempted to do this, but not, I think, with much success (Prozesky, unpublished).[4] But then to attempt to provide a generally acceptable structure within which to distinguish, scientifically so to speak, between salutary and harmful forms of religion, it seems to me, is virtually doomed from the start. Nevertheless, Gregory Baum claims that a foundation for the kind of position Chidester and Prozesky espouse can be found in a hermeneutic understanding of the "human [social] sciences." In the human sciences, which include the study of religion, he insists, truth has a transformative character or quality. For Baum then, as he puts it in a paper to have been presented in South Africa, "religious studies, and the human sciences in general, should not only aim at understanding reality but also at transforming it" (1990: 4–5).[5]

According to Baum, an "acceptable" study of any phenomenon cannot simply concern itself with the description and explanation of events but must also include evaluation which implies the existence of a commitment to specific moral values. Simply to study something objectively is to leave things as they are. To assume that science, as science, has nothing to say regarding injustice and oppression in society makes of science, then, a conservative and ideological enterprise for it then, at least indirectly, supports the *status quo*. As Baum puts it: "The objectivity of science understood in this sense is actually a powerful ideological instrument that helps to reconcile the intellectual community with the existing social order" (1990: 7); it accounts for conditions as

if they were necessary and therefore places them beyond the bounds of critique. It is obvious, Baum therefore argues, that the ethical relativism of the notion of objective scientific analysis must be transcended and that "truth" in the human sciences requires more of the student than mere "demonstration of an hypothesis on the basis of empirical data and more than an act of interpretation in keeping with the self-understanding of the actors" (1990: 6). Consequently, he writes:

> If we study the subjugation of women in religion, or the manner in which some religions treat outsiders, or the blessings pronounced by religions on rulers and princes, we cannot be content with understanding what these actions meant to the believers at the time. They truly believed that these actions corresponded to ordinances of divine origin. Here religious studies must move from the "empirical research" and "hermeneutics" to a "social analysis" of the situation (Habermas). Here the researcher must try to discover the social function of these religious practices and entertain the possibility that the self-understanding of the believers was distorted (1990: 5).

That university departments of religious studies, past and present, have not always been religiously or politically neutral is not news. That it has been an ideal to keep the academic study in those contexts religiously and politically neutral – in so far as that is possible – is also well known. But what is relatively new is the explicit, and often belligerent, attack upon that ideal and that, I submit, is a transformation that is having a profoundly detrimental effect upon the field. There is a sense in which it has split the religious studies academic community into two camps and has thereby created the conditions for a civil war within the field. What is in store for religious studies with the continued rejection of that ideal is already to be seen in J. Neusner's account of "The civil war in Jewish studies" (1986), which finds its source, as Neusner shows, in the split between Jewish scholars concerned with humanistic learning and those concerned with preserving Jewish values. The critical attitude so characteristic of the academic community, Neusner correctly points

out, will be discounted as a form of disrespect and hatred for our "subject matter". And criticism of those who approach the study of religions in a critical and scientific fashion will degenerate into mere condemnation and overt insult. Indeed, this appears already to be the case to a considerable extent in religious studies. Gary Lease, for example, points to precisely such conflict as the root cause for the "fall of religious studies at Santa Cruz." "Religious Studies, at the height of its popularity and success at Santa Cruz," he writes, "attempted to define itself as concerned with individual students' own religious traditions; with the possibility and value of religion; and with the cultural components from three such traditions." And the consequences, he notes, were not long in coming. "As might be expected," he writes:

> a deep inability on the part of Religious Studies faculty to reach unanimity concerning the program's academic identity quickly surfaced. There was, in other words, trouble in paradise. The split which developed can most easily be characterized as a division between those who viewed a religious studies program as *also* directed towards the development of each individual student's religious growth and sensitivity, and those who considered such a program to be concerned *only* with making intelligible what people *claim* as religious experience. ... In a larger faculty such a split may well have meant nothing more than infrequent disagreement at meetings; in a board as small as Religious Studies this ideological divergence had a powerful impact on the program itself: Above all, it was manifested in the lack of a planned and coherent curriculum dedicated to commonly shared goals (1989: 10).

Similar tensions dominate discussions in my own, much larger, university department and Centre for the Study of Religion and have led to some very uncivil exchanges involving charges and counter-charges of "witch hunts" being carried on by one faction against the other. Those charges are to be found in correspondence generated by a "debate" held in the Centre for Religious Studies in Toronto in the fall of 1984

on the topic "The relationship between theological and religious studies: What should the Toronto model be?"[6] The reasons for the tension underlying that debate can only properly be discerned, I think, in an examination of the archival material in connection with the formation of the Centre for Religious Studies, which was quite deliberately established as an independent unit in relation to the undergraduate Department of Religious Studies which was perceived as being dominated by a religio-theological perspective. But I shall not pursue that matter further here.[7]

More broadly, the same tensions can be seen in the academic societies and associations dedicated to the study of religions. Though I cannot go into a detailed analysis, I note, for example, the tone of the discussions concerning the St. Louis project on Theology and Religious Studies in the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* where Ivan Strenski, quite correctly I think, paints those who wish to bring about an integration of theology with religious studies as "our very own contras" (1986: 324).[8] And the response to Wiebe's "The failure of nerve in the academic study of religion," (a presentation to the Canadian Society for the Study of Religion and eventually published in that Society's journal, *Studies in Religion*, 1984), by Charles Davis is described by Penner as "beneath the standards that are commonly accepted among colleagues" (Penner 1986: 165, n. 1).[9] Germane here also is the kind of treatment afforded the scholarship of one group by the other as is indicated by the note K. Rudolph attached to his paper on Eliade to which I have referred above:

> This article originally appeared as "*Eliade und die 'Religionsgeschichte'*" in one of three German *Festschriften* that Hans-Peter Duerr edited on the occasion of Mircea Eliade's 75th birthday: *Die Mitte der Welt: Aufsätze zu Mircea Eliade* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1984, pp. 49–78). Professor Duerr invited contributors to write a critical essay on Eliade or on a theme that Eliade had discussed, so as to set a precedent for a new kind of *Festschrift*. The plans for an American edition of – or rather, an American

> selection from — the *Festschrift*, to be published by the University of Chicago Press under the leadership of Wendy D. O'Flaherty, have by now excised almost all contributions to the German edition that were critical of Eliade; as a result, it will simply replicate the model of the traditional *Festschrift*. I venture to doubt that such was the desire of Eliade himself, who is unfortunately no longer among us. Eliade was always kind enough to tolerate justified criticism (1989: 118).

And as Tilley's recent review of J. Samuel Preus' *Explaining religion: Criticism and theory from Bodin to Freud* clearly indicates, the polemics and politics of explaining religion is likely to continue for some time and, I suspect, in a rather heated mode given what is at stake — namely, who is to control the study of religion in the modern university and what is the agenda of that study to be (Tilley 1991: 252). That socio-political change and concerns with religious transformation are interrelated in the determination of these matters is beyond doubt. How they are interrelated, or ought to be, is not. As far as Tilley is concerned, it is not only the religious researchers who have taken on a missionary role in the university to the detriment of critical analysis and research. Besides the *religious* missionaries there are, he insists, *academic* missionaries: "As the former want to bring people to a commitment to a religious faith so the tradition may thrive, the latter want to bring people to a commitment to learn the skeptically based academic study of religion to carry on that tradition. Naturalists are no less guilty of missionary work than are theologians" (1991: 253).[10] The academic students of religion in Tilley's viewpoint, then, are the persons responsible for introducing a religious warfare into the academic context.

In light of these developments in the field of religious studies it seems to me that if we are ever to regain that position on the basis of which our field achieved academic/scientific legitimation we will have to take up the battle Weber found himself engaged in regarding the role of science in modern society. As Aron describes it: "He fought on two fronts: against those who threatened to corrupt the purity of

rational thought by bringing in political convictions or sentimental outpourings, and those who falsified the meaning of science by attributing to it the capability of unlocking the secret of the nature of man" (1985: 340—341). Those who see science as but another ideological structure have not understood its nature; they fail to see that what is special about science is that it concerns restrictions. Science, that is, attempts to obtain reliable beliefs about the world beyond us; it attempts to understand the world as it is and to represent it as accurately as possible. That is its only task. As Weber put it: "Science today is a 'vocation' organized in special disciplines in the service of self-clarification and knowledge of interrelated facts. It is not the gift of grace of seers and prophets dispensing sacred values and revelations, nor does it partake of the contemplation of sages and philosophers about the meaning of the universe" (1946: 152).[11] Consequently, "in the lecture rooms of the university," Weber insists, "no other virtue holds but plain intellectual integrity" (1946: 155—156). Some may argue that scientists are then less than human because they evade their moral responsibility by restricting their influence simply to teaching, research and writing. But if that is the case, then those who wish to retain their moral and/or religious integrity ought simply to forego all involvement in science.[12] The whole point of science, as Weber clearly sets out, is precisely to limit itself to this kind of (purely) academic function.[13] In his essay on "'Objectivity' in social science and social policy" he shows that no empirical science can create — "in the forms of generally valid ultimate value judgements" — a lowest common denominator for the resolution of spiritual, social or political problems. Only dogmatically bound religio-ideological groups (such as positive religions, for example), he insists, can confer the status of unconditionally valid ethical imperatives on cultural values. Thus he writes that:

> The fate of an epoch which has eaten of the tree of knowledge is that it must know that we cannot learn the *meaning* of the world from the results of its analysis, be it ever so perfect; it must rather be in a position to create this meaning itself. It must recognize

> that general views of life and the universe can never be the products of increasing empirical knowledge, and that the highest ideals, which move us most forcefully, are always formed only in the struggle with other ideals which are just as sacred to others as ours are to us (1949: 57).

Maurice Cowling, in trying to make clear the difference between politics and political science nearly fifty years later, enunciates the academic implications of that Weberian analysis with precision: "the only rational action to which scholars, *as scholars* [emphasis added], are committed, the only moral action to which they are commanded and the only 'social responsibility' to which their *professional* position compels them, is to use their energies in order to explain in its full diversity as much as they can of the nature of the world in which they live" (1963: 210).[14] To go beyond that mandate, whether in political science or in the academic study of religion, by engaging in political or religious activity "in the classroom," is then simply to reject what we might reasonably call "the morality of scientific knowing" (Wiebe 1977; see also the essays in McCarthy, 1986). As Weber put it:

> one cannot demonstrate scientifically what the duty of an academic teacher is. One can only demand of the teacher that he have the intellectual integrity to see that it is one thing to state facts, to determine mathematical or logical relations or the internal structure of cultural values, while it is another thing to answer questions of the *value* of culture and its individual contents and the question of how one should act in the cultural community and in political associations (1949: 146).

Those responsible for introducing the "warfare" into the field of religious studies, therefore, are not, contrary to Tilley's claim, the "naturalists," but rather those who have claimed to take up a scientific study of religion but have instead attempted to integrate it with their own religious and/or political aspirations.[15] This is precisely why Werblowsky, having seen the specter of turmoil in the peculiar circum-

stances of the Marburg international IAHR Congress, wrote: "The facts and analyses of *Religionswissenschaft* may become the raw material for a *theologia naturalis* or for any other philosophical, [socio-political], or religious system. But this is already outside the terms of reference of *Religionswissenschaft* and therefore no longer the concern of the student of religion" (Werblowsky, in: Schimmel 1960: 237 and 1960).

How we can account for these developments in the academic study of religion is not, I think, difficult to comprehend. Contemporary students of religion want to be scientists because they see in science a very successful, and therefore valid, mode of thought. However, they want to be not only scientists but also socially responsible citizens and see their function as intellectuals in society as one of developing or protecting and refining the framework of meaning (ideology) of their own society. For many of them, religion is absolutely essential to a meaningful life within a coherent social framework and a "naturalistic study" of religion seems to undermine religion. Consequently they find themselves in a dilemma in that their intellectual role as scholar/scientist is in conflict with their perceived function of caring for and repairing the myths by which their culture lives.[16] In a very important sense, therefore, the conflict of views that I have so briefly delineated in this paper regarding the nature of the interrelations between religions (with their salvific-emancipatory aims) and the academic institutions within which we seek to understand them is but another reflection of the science-religion conflict that has characterized so much of western civilization. What is required in that debate, and not only in the field of the study of religion, but especially there, as I have argued at length elsewhere (Wiebe 1985, 1989, 1991), is an either/or choice, for it is not scientifically acceptable to mix our science with modes of thought that contradict or undermine its fundamental intentionality. W. Burkert's comments in this respect, which I have quoted on more than one occasion, are fitting as a conclusion to my remarks here:

> The language that has proved the most generally understood and cross-cultural is that of secularized scholarship. Its practice today

> is determined by science in its broadest sense, its system of rules by the laws of logic. It may, of course, seem the most questionable endeavour of all to try to translate religious phenomena into this language; by its self-conception, a religion must deny that such explanations are possible. However, scholarship is free to study even the rejection of knowledge and repudiation of independent thought, for scholarship, in attempting to understand the world, has the broader perspective here and cannot abstain from analyzing the worldwide fact of religion. This is not a hopeless undertaking. However, a discussion of religion must then be anything but religious (1983: xxi).

Notes

1. What is meant by this claim is that "religion" is like any other subject matter; it is *not* somehow special. What it is, is not determined by some peculiar essence it, so to speak, possesses but by particular problems and interests related to the data. We can say of religious studies (*mutatis mutandis*), therefore, what Ernest Gellner says of anthropology: "The idea of anthropology is rooted not so much in the distinctiveness of man as in its denial. As long as man stood outside nature, his special status exempted him from ordinary inquiry. It was his demotion to an ordinary, if distinguished, member of nature which made it inevitable that something like anthropology should arise" (1988: 17).
2. Huntsberry, part of "A forum of the study of religion in the university" that included contributions from W. H. Capps and Benjamin Ladner), *Journal for the American Academy of Religion*, 63 (1968). Note here John B. Carman's comment: "We clearly wear the secular garb of the modern academician, but we, too, have our vocation and our mission," in "Inter-Faith Dialogue and Academic Study of Religion" (in: Samartha 1971: 86).
3. I have, in my "Failure of nerve" article (1984), referred to such generic religion as "small c confessionalism". The critique I provide there shows

clearly the structural identity between the "capital C Confessionalism" that all academic students of religion see as unacceptable in the university context. It is difficult, therefore, to understand how those same scholars can see a small c confessionalism as being essential to the academic study of religion. That article also provides additional documentary evidence of the pervasiveness of generic religion in the university setting. My essay "Postulations for safeguarding preconceptions: The case of the scientific religionist" (1988) adds to that in a brief overview of Presidential addresses to the American Academy of Religion. To the material contained there one might also add the Presidential addresses of Wendy Doniger (O'Flaherty) 1986, Robert L. Wilken 1990, and Huston Smith 1990.

4. Delivered to the XVIth International Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR) in September of 1990 (Rome), Prozesky's paper expands upon themes in his 1985 paper to the XVth IAHR Congress in 1985 (Sydney, Australia), later published as "Explanations of religion as a part of and problem for religious studies" (1988).
5. Professor Baum's paper was to have been presented at the "Conference on the contribution of South Africa to religious studies and theology" at the University of Cape Town in April 1989, but he was not granted a visa and was not therefore able to present his paper in person.
6. Some of this information is to be found in correspondence that is lodged in the archives of Trinity College in Toronto. The "debate" was taped by a graduate student, Ms. M. Wyse, and was deposited in the University of Toronto archives.
7. The relevant reports and correspondence in the University of Toronto archives indicate quite clearly that theology in general and the Toronto School of Theology in particular were important concerns. The fact that the undergraduate department emerged from combining the resources of the various Departments of Religious Knowledge in the religious colleges on the university campus is also a major factor that needs serious consideration here.
8. Strenski argues that the report of the "St. Louis Project", which concerned itself with the reintegration of theology with Religious Studies (see *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 52 (1984): 727—757) and the inclusion of an award for excellence in constructive religious/theological thought are counter-revolutionary developments that undermine the optimism of many scholars in religious studies about the academic character of this field. In

1971, he wrote that: "The value of the scholarly study of religion in college and university has now been so widely acknowledged that it need no longer be a subject of anxiety" (Strenski 1971: 13). The force of Strenski's anxiety about the possible results of these counter-revolutionary developments is well expressed in the following paragraph:

> I cannot see how this "constructive-reflective study of religion" belongs in the AAR's list of award categories. The AAR might just as well create a "Saint's List" for practical excellence in *being* religious. An award for *thinking* religiously is not all that different. There may well be a "new religious consciousness" welling up across the land, at least among intellectuals estranged from the "hippopotamus churches." But America has known well how to give such feelings voice and nurture — in the *agora*, in the churches. And, if existing churches are hostile, America again gives us a time-tried solution — found a new church. But, leave the *academia* to be itself. Religious studies does not need to undermine its own academic aspirations. It needs to get on with the job. Without lapsing into a discredited positivism, we in religious studies must resist its re-theologizing — even if these days the new theology speaks often in the seductive pseudo-universal language of continental Hermeneutics, the archaic religion of Eliade, or the post- critical faith of Ricoeur. Our job is still to *study* religion, not to *make* or "construct" it (1986: 331—332).

Walter Capps, in "A response to Dr. Strenski," sees Strenski's remarks as "uncommonly vitriolic commentary" (1987: 125) filled with "ill-mannered volleys of rhetorical venom" (1987: 126). Capps maintains that Strenski has simply misunderstood the "St. Louis Project" which was essentially an emancipation of religious studies in the context of a Catholic university in which only a theological approach to religion had thus far been the rule. Though there may be some validity to Capps's claim here, his account does not really capture the nature of that project's full intention. I have provided a brief analysis of it in my "Postulations" article (1988). The intention of the "St. Louis Project" is, in fact, similar to Davis's intent in his "The reconvergence of theology and religious studies", (1975, see also his "Theology and religious study", 1981). I think Weber's comments in "A Catholic university in Salzburg" (in Shils 1973) stand in support of Strenski here.

As Weber points out, the appointment of persons in conditions of the kind described by Capps present serious problems; "they are absolutely incompatible with a selection of candidates according to strictly scientific and scholarly criteria. ... Such a university would naturally not be one likely to be viewed by academic institutions as of equal standing and rights, nor would it indeed be accorded equal privileges" (1973b: 46).

9. See Wiebe's essay and the response by C. Davis 1984. Other essays directed to the Wiebe/Davis exchange by L. Dawson, B. Alton, B. Henaut and Wiebe are also to be found in the same issues of *Studies in Religion*, 13 (1984).
10. I think Tilley's comments here without basis. It is clear in Weber's mind that this is not the case in the universities of his day: "Whether, under such conditions, science is a worth while 'vocation' for someone, and whether science itself has an objectively valuable 'vocation', are again value judgments about which nothing can be said in the lecture room. To affirm the value of science is a presupposition for teaching there" (Weber 1946: 152). See here also his comments in this regard in his "The academic freedom of the universities" (1973a).
11. Weber writes:

    > if Tolstoi's question recurs to you: as science does not, who is to answer the question: "What shall we do and, how shall we arrange our lives?" or, in the words used here tonight: "Which of the warring gods should we serve? Or should we serve perhaps an entirely different god, and who is he?" then one can say only that a prophet or savior can give the answers. If there is no such man, or if his message is no longer believed in, then you will certainly not compel him to appear on this earth by having thousands of professors, or privileged hirelings of this state, attempt as petty prophets in their lecture-rooms to take over his role. All they will accomplish is to show that they are unaware of the divine state of affairs: the prophet for whom so many of our younger generation yearns simply does not exist (1946: 152–153).

12. It is not obvious, however, that that is the case. Certainly Weber thought the scientific, (i. e., non-valuative) study of values possible and not without benefit to the communities espousing those values. This essay, however, is not the place in which to attempt to elucidate the nature of the relationships of values to science and science to other cultural values. With respect to

the scientific study of religion, however, one might helpfully consult in this regard E. Thomas Lawson's and Robert N. McCauley's forthcoming essay, "Crisis of conscience, riddle of identity: Making space for a cognitive approach to religious phenomena". For a further comment on the *meaning* of science see note 14 below.

13. Lassman-Velody 1989 claim that the question of the meaning of science was still a central issue for Weber. The central problem in his account of the development of science, they argue, is that of its own legitimation or justification. Although I am in agreement with them on this score, I do not think Weber's handling of that question nearly as ironic, and therefore internally inconsistent, as do they, and I do not think, therefore, that my understanding of Weber's argument here lacks cogency. These differences of interpretation, however, cannot be taken up here (see here also Shils who speaks of Weber's moving confession of faith in "the value of science and scholarship" which is coupled with "a tragic awareness of their limits" (Shils 1973: 3).
14. Religious studies in this respect is like political science and the other social sciences, a cognitively oriented scientific undertaking and not like philosophy which, as it appears, has generally been understood to provide a kind of supra-scientific, and therefore foundational, knowledge. Consequently, the-end-of-philosophy debate current today has no relevance to the matter under discussion here.
15. I think here again of claims like those of John Carman (see n. 2 above).
16. This point is made particularly clearly by William H. McNeil which I discussed in relation to the "history of religions" in my "History or mythistory in the study of religion? The problems of demarcation" (1989). Raymond Aron shows how acutely this characterized sociologists like Durkheim, Pareto and Weber: "This is the contradiction peculiar to our sociologists; the contradiction between the need for scientific precision in the analysis of society and the conviction that scientific propositions cannot unite men, since the coherence and order of every society is always maintained by ultra-, infra-, or supra-rational beliefs" (1967: 3). It appears that they did not fully understand their tasks as scientists but rather confused it with the role intellectuals have, it appears, always played in society, namely that of developing an ideology for the society in which they lived. J. Z. Smith seems to point to a similar problem for students of religion in his essay "Map is not territory". Although for Smith, the human sciences,

including history and the history of religions, "serve as limiting perspectives" on his understanding of religion — i. e. "as boundaries of concreteness over against which to judge more speculative and normative inquiries in religious studies" (1978: 289) — he restricts the tasks of the scientific student purely to the non-speculative and non-normative matters. The philosopher and theologian, he concedes, may have "a standpoint from which he [she] may gain clear vision" (1978: 289), but the historian is a person of hints and insights at best, which are incapable of grounding such vision. The historian (scientific student of religion), therefore, can approach religion simply as a human phenomenon — "as one mode of constructing worlds of meaning" (1978: 290). Consequently, "Religious Studies are most appropriately described in relation to the Humanities and the Human Sciences, in relation to Anthropology rather than Theology" (1978: 290). In summary, then, religion is seen as the power to relate to the natural and social world "in such a way as to guarantee the conviction that one's (*sic*) existence 'matters'" (1978: 291). Thus, "[w]hat we study when we study religion is the variety of attempts to map, construct, and inhabit such positions of power through the use of myths, rituals, and experiences of transformation" (1978: 291).

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Conclusion

E. Thomas Lawson

Methodological conceits and theoretical opportunities: Reflections on the level of analysis appropriate for explaining socio-cultural phenomena

One of the persistent conceits prevalent in the human sciences consists in the assumption that basic notions such as "society", "culture" and "religion" as well as derivative notions such as "religious transformations" and "socio-political change" are well established referential terms capable of individuating phenomena of scientific interest. Scholars in the human sciences too often simply presuppose their ready availability for a productive analysis of human behavior. They tend to treat such terms as viable intellectual currency capable of purchasing important insights into problematic features of human thought and action. One of the consequences of such presumption is the unwarranted view that any theoretical work which challenges the power of these terms to illuminate our understanding of human behavior consists of supererogatory intellectual activity deflecting us from the *real* task at hand, namely, accounting for problems such as religious transformation and socio-political change with the categories securely in hand.

There is also, however, a further conceit current within the human sciences (held by the special few who have sniffed out the prevailing conceit) which holds that it is worthless to bother either about justifying the employment of such categories or about developing interesting theories to support or supplant them because the real purpose of the human sciences is not explanatory at all but interpretive. In this approach "thick description", "participant observation", "intersubjective

dialogue" and the like provide the coin to procure the leverage necessary to interpret social and cultural systems. Explanatory theorizing, from this perspective, is best left to the hard sciences; interpretation in the human "sciences" requires reading "texts," or engaging in discourse, dialogue and deconstruction. This hermeneutic strategy involves not only the reading of texts but the treating of social and cultural phenomena in overtly literary ways. Literary criticism becomes the overarching methodological model. So whole societies and cultures become stand-ins for literary works, and are treated as if they possess an inherent systematicity which requires only the discovery of their internal logics.

Coupled with this hermeneutic strategy we often find the recommendation that scholars in the human sciences eschew scientific theorizing altogether, at least if the project of the human sciences is an attempt to increase our knowledge about human subjects. The point here seems to be that not only do the human sciences deal with knowers in search of something to know, but that knowledge is a reflexive activity in which the very act of inquiry itself prevents us from operating at a level of objectivity supposedly characteristic of the hard sciences. Subjectivity, therefore, rules the day.

This hermeneutic dance transmogrifies the "science" in human science into a purely interpretive endeavor in search of the "meaning" of "texts" which are often not texts at all, and subtexts which are more likely to be pretexts for various ideological agendas. This approach consigns science (as the activity in search of an explanatory understanding of the world focusing upon principles and processes) either to the "natural" sciences (while scholars in the human sciences get on with the "real" work) or else to irrelevant speculation inappropriate when dealing with things human.

Fortunately scholars in the human sciences are not obliged to settle for either of these conceits. Scientific studies of human thought and action (including religious thought and action) is are alive and well (even if under siege) in unexpected places in the academic market place, especially in cooperative interdisciplinary ventures among scholars in psychology, anthropology, linguistics, philosophy and comparative re-

ligion, and particularly in cognitive theorizing that has become associated with these disciplines. The goal of such an interdisciplinary scientific study, especially when it takes a cognitive turn, is to provide tractable accounts of what happens in societies by theorizing about what goes on in human minds and in the interaction among them.

Reading through the manuscripts in this volume forced me to realize once again how important it is for scholars in the human sciences (particularly those interested in religion) to commence their inquiries into social and cultural phenomena (such as the relative stability of certain religious forms through long periods of time and the equally impressive transformations which religious forms sometimes undergo in very short historical periods) by recognizing that referential terms such as those alluded to above derive whatever sense and explanatory power they may possess from the theories in which they are embedded. Even the hermeneutically inclined, precipitously bolting from theoretical work, lug with them undeclared theoretical baggage not always expertly concealed from inquiring eyes.

The cognitive revolution, now in full swing as a genuinely interdisciplinary scientific enterprise, represents a fundamental intellectual challenge to all scholars in the human sciences because it promises a deeper understanding of how fundamental cognitive structures inform and constrain human social and cultural behavior. This revolution requires all scholars engaged in plumbing the depths of social and cultural phenomena to advert to the kind of sophisticated psychological theorizing now in the process of development.

Cognitive approaches to human thought and action not only provide new methods and categories for their analysis, but also ground them in empirically tractable theories capable of producing fruitful insights about social and cultural phenomena such as the acquisition and transmission of knowledge, the novelty and repetitiveness of acts, and the structures of human interaction.

Until the emergence of radically new cognitive models those scholars in the human sciences who had courageously resisted hermeneutic adventurism had, nevertheless, acted as if emotivist, intellectualist,

symbolist, structuralist and ideological theories were the only games in town. While we applaud this resistance movement for attempting to remain faithful to the "science" in human science, we suggest that faithfulness to inadequate theories, and flawed methods will not do. More is required.

Some of the papers in this volume seem to be aware of the necessity for breaking new ground, a necessity because of the crisis in the human sciences reflected in the conflict of conceits alluded to above. Many others seem at least to acknowledge that something significant is afoot that requires new approaches to social and cultural phenomena. In fact many of the papers in this volume exude a kind of intellectual unease (whether they are by Western Europeans, Eastern Europeans, Latin Americans, or North Americans) with standard approaches to the role that religion plays in society. This unease bodes well for future inquiries into religious behavior.

A few of the papers move beyond suspicion by explicitly recognizing such a crisis. For example, Armin Geertz commences his paper by highlighting Pascal Boyer's critique of mainline anthropology (Boyer 1990). Boyer sees anthropologists as either ignoring psychological issues altogether or else as employing a very simplistic outdated psychology in their attempt to account for the acquisition and transmission of cultural knowledge, and cultural interaction. For example, anthropologists only too often seem content to lump together diverse institutions and then to treat them as unified phenomena without demonstrating what scientifically relevant properties such putative unities might have. Terms like "socio-political change" would be a case in point. Boyer warns us that there can be "no theory of what happens in cultural interaction without some strong hypotheses about what is happening in the actor's minds". This is clearly a voice from the center of the cognitive revolution (Boyer 1992). We also see stirrings of unease in Versnel's paper when faced with problematic data from Hellenistic religion. But unfortunately Versnel does not appeal to the cognitive revolution for new insights into old problems. Instead he rather desperately attempts to resurrect the outworn Feuerbachian notion of

projection. This is certainly a step backwards which ignores the availability of far more relevant contemporary theoretical models. [Ed.: But see H. S. Versnel. *Ter unus. Isis, Dionysos, Hermes. Three studies in henotheism* (Leiden 1990): 1–35.]

Nor is such awareness of the inadequacy of the standard approaches to issues in the human sciences absent from the work of our Eastern European colleagues. Here too there seems to be a quest for new approaches. Szmyd, for example, acknowledges that "there is little significant knowledge about the complicated mechanisms and conditions of this process [which show the essential dependence between national history, culture and religiousness]." Smolyakov talks about the "breaking of ideological chains" and Zotz talks about "the liberation of consciousness." Refreshing breezes seem to be blowing across the cross-cultural intellectual landscape. The question is whether these breezes are strong enough to bring better weather.

When we turn to the scholarly voices from Latin America we see further evidence of dissatisfaction with standard approaches to the study of religious thought and behavior and a search for new categories. Masferrer, for example, shows how the fluidity of religious thought and behavior in Latin America strains conventional analyses of religion and change in that part of the world. However, he suggests only the development of new typologies capable of characterizing the various and variegated forms that religion takes in Latin America. For such typologies to be relevant they will have to be grounded in new theoretical work. Marcos is also unhappy with prevailing approaches; in her discussion of indigenous eroticism she argues that contemporary approaches in the human sciences fail to provide the categories capable of explaining the conflict that arose in the period of contact between Europe and the New World. And Pablo Wright flirts with hermeneutics by exploring the intricacies of intersubjectivity which he recommends to ethnographers who find themselves trapped in the hermeneutic circle all the while seeking to ground it both by creating a situation of discourse and by acknowledging that the subjects studied in ethno-

graphic work are quite capable of representing to themselves the world in which they act.

From my point of view, however, neither acknowledging that something is amiss (as all the scholars I have mentioned seem willing to do), nor hoping for novel theories to come along will be sufficient for increasing or substantiating our knowledge about topics such as "religious transformation" and "socio-political change." Even though many of the papers in this volume resist standard scientific and hermeneutic approaches to these topics and appeal for the recognition of historical and sociological complexity they tend only too often either to employ or presuppose the very kind of simplistic psychology that Boyer has warned us about. In large measure these papers are symptomatic of the fact that the human sciences even in their disarray remain enthralled by Durkheim's views about the autonomy of social (and cultural) facts. They simply seem to presuppose that all significant and productive explanation lies at the socio-cultural level and with socio-cultural categories.

Despite the pervasive influence of Durkheim on generations of scholars in the human sciences, it has become increasingly apparent to a new generation that what goes on in a society and its various cultural forms simply cannot be understood apart from "what goes on in human minds" because cognitive processes constrain both the range and organization of cultural representations as well as their transmission and transformation from generation to generation. I am grateful therefore that Armin Geertz has fired a warning shot across the bow of the human sciences by highlighting Boyer's critique of the antipsychological tendency of anthropologists (and other scholars in the human sciences). For too long they have conspired to maintain the illusion that social and cultural phenomena automatically and autonomously possesses systematic properties which are then regarded as sufficient to account for human behavior.

We ought seriously to question the common assumption that all the significant variables requisite for the interpretation and explanation of phenomena such as religious transformations and socio-political change

(and especially their connections with each other) reside mainly or only at the socio-cultural level of analysis requiring only empty (or cognitively impoverished) minds as the transmitting agents.

One of the papers in this volume flirts with the transition from a culturological to a cognitively constrained approach, the intriguing paper by Ivan Strenski. His argument that ritual sacrificial – and civic sacrificial – domains share a common structure has many strengths, and its comparative approach is most welcome. But it lacks, or fails to entertain, or even to hint at the possibility that a cognitive theory capable of identifying the psychological mechanisms required to explain the commonality in question might be possible. Thus, despite recognizing common structures (what is their theoretical status?), Strenski opts for an unexplicated notion of "culture" which he seems to think can carry all the necessary interpretive and explanatory weight for accounting for the presence, persistence and use of concepts and practices such as "sacrifice" in human groups.

Strenski not only seems to ignore the work of scholars in the cognitive sciences but the long-standing critique by philosophers of social science of "culture theory." They have repeatedly shown that concepts such as "culture" are simply incapable of bearing the explanatory weight required to account for the acquisition and transmission of either ideas or practices in human groups for the reason that such "theory" has never been able to specify the mechanisms capable of accounting for the processes involved. So why continue to assume that it does? This is not to deny the possibility of social and cultural forces, but only to demand that their explication not be achieved by vicious circularity.

In fact one "cultural" science which took such critique to heart was the science of linguistics. Linguistics only began to make progress in explaining the basis, structure, and transmission of language (a cultural phenomenon *par excellence*) when linguists recognized that cultural categories were incapable of producing systematic and empirically tractable theories capable of producing new knowledge about human languages. The study of language from that point on took a decidedly

psychological turn by focusing upon the mental mechanisms that constrain cultural form.

Continuing to account for religious behavior by appealing to exclusively cultural categories requires that we place our trust in the unfalsifiable intuitions and circular reasoning of scholars in the human sciences who "know their history" and can "think deep thoughts." I think that it is time to look more closely at the results being produced at the cognitive level of analysis, results which are empirically tractable, noncircular, and capable of producing theoretically supported cross-cultural generalizations that promise genuine insights into human thought and action. These results point to psychological structures that require only being triggered by social and cultural factors in order to develop in significant ways in human situations.

Even if it is a fact that human beings in certain socio-cultural situations both talk about sacrifice and engage in sacrificial acts we still need an independent account for such behavior. It is not enough either to call our attention to cross-cultural similarities or worse yet simply to posit cultural forces without further explication. Given the immense variability in the organization of human societies, and the very complex relationships that individuals and groups of individuals have to each other, why ignore the possibility that both the variability and the similarity might require a psychological explanation (in the cognitive and not the affective sense of psychology)? One thing is certain; neither emotivist nor ideological theories have delivered an adequate and interesting account of such behavior largely because they fail to locate and describe the social and cultural variables sufficient to explain the facts.

What we should conclude from this is that "culture" and cultural phenomena such as "religious transformation" and "socio-political change" rather than being explanatory are themselves in need of explanation. There certainly are commonalities and recurrences in human behavior, but purely social and cultural categories do not explain them. They only notice them.

Even noticing them, of course, is an achievement. One of the theoretically grounded facts about human beings that has emerged in the cognitive sciences is that people are excellent at pattern recognition (including seeing patterns in the range of cultural phenomena!). People are even good at finding patterns that are not there.

Considerable theoretical attention in the cognitive sciences has been devoted to identifying the psychological mechanisms (and their neural bases) that ground this pattern recognition ability. One of the theories proposed in the cognitive sciences involves explaining such pattern recognition abilities not merely as a representational device adverting to, or cognitively structuring, what is "out there," but as an instance of theorizing where "theorizing" is a complex interaction of interpretive and explanatory techniques grounded in the way the mind-brain is organized.

This complex cognitive ability depends upon deeply embedded structures not all of which are acquired at the same time and in the same way in the process of cognitive development. Some structures, and the categories they ground, seem to be in place in very early infancy, others take longer to emerge in the process of cognitive development. Notions such as "agent," "object" and "action" not only appear very early (as demonstrated by very sophisticated experiments) but seem to have systematic relations with each other such that they are capable of being syntactically represented (Lawson-McCauley 1990: ch. 5). Examining the products of the syntactic principles which generate judgments about social and cultural forms discloses universal features in the representation of ritual action. It is my view that ritual behavior (including such notions as "sacrifice") finds an interesting and adequate account as extensions of the cognitive ability of human beings to discover and represent the social and cultural surround in a principled manner. The complex conceptual schemes available to human beings in different social and cultural situations provide the semantic content but not the causal factors necessary to explain the acquisition and transmission of cultural information. The causal factors seem to lie at the psychological level and constrain the recurrence and transmission of ideas and the

practices associated with them. The picture that is emerging as the result of such cognitive analyses is of a highly structured psychology with many relatively independent mechanisms requiring diverse social and cultural cues for their operation.

All of this raises questions about connecting cognition and culture. One conservative view is that mind is the mirror of culture where "culture" refers to a system identifiable by an analyses of cognitive principles and products. In this view whatever goes on in a society is mirrored in psychological structure. A more radical view sees "culture" not as one thing but as an aggregate of diverse and not necessarily integrated phenomena all of which are products of mind. Whichever view one adopts, both views explain cultural phenomena (including whatever systematicity resides at the cultural level) by paying attention to noncultural phenomena. The problem here is to find the most appropriate level of systematicity capable of providing productive analyses.

One theoretically interesting phenomenon has to do with the fact that people demonstrate systematic capabilities even when they are presented with fragmentary evidence. This is clearly evident in the way children learn language, customs, and ritual forms. Another seemingly obvious fact which requires explanation is that not everything that human minds produce is automatically transmitted from generation to generation. There are selective (and other) processes at work. At present we are learning more about these processes and their results. Dealing with issues of transformation and change requires us to pay attention to the nature of these processes.

For those scholars in the human sciences who insist upon avoiding causal explanations at all, whether by employing standard approaches or by investigating cognitive alternatives, the interpretive venture, unconstrained by explanatory concerns, will continue to be an *ad hoc* game played out in an academic field with neither lines, goal posts nor teams of players. Their invitations to a new generation of students to come and play with them may not amount to much more than making the game up as they go along. And for those scholars in the human

sciences who insist upon the autonomy of social and cultural analyses, their explanatory excursions will continue to take place in unnecessarily restricted territory.

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Index

This index does not reference specific materials and examples treated by individual authors; rather it attempts to identify topics and themes that recur throughout the volume. An economy of thought and not its precision dictated the conflation of some entries, "folk" and "popular religion", for example.

atheism 70, 75, 91–94, 98, 120

Catholicism 63–65, 69–70, 86, 97–105, 118–123, 127–130, 136, 149–150, 157, 159, 177, 185, 192, 198, 201, 207–216, 237–250, 295, 301–314
capitalism 77, 84, 98–99, 101, 103, 181, 189, 190–191, 200, 211, 215–216, 293
cognition, cognitive studies 199, 325, 337, 412, 443–451
colonial, colonization 61, 103, 141, 214, 221–231, 238, 240, 241, 242, 246, 249, 383
conquest 51, 64, 207–208, 221, 225–228, 237, 238, 240, 242
communism 2, 48, 63, 70, 86, 95–96, 98, 101, 143
consciousness 76, 78–79, 81, 83, 111, 115, 122–123, 161, 164
Counter-reformation *see* Protestant reformation

democracy 29, 66, 83, 97, 105, 198, 294
discourse, rhetoric 37, 112, 114, 256, 284, 295, 298, 360, 363–364, 383–385, 391, 397, 404, 412, 442
divination 13, 17, 21, 89, 386–387, 395

Enlightenment 20, 102, 104, 105, 327, 328
evangelization 181, 198, 226–227, 230, 238–241, 387–388, 396

folk religion *see* popular religion
fundamentalism 112–113, 141–147, 149, 198, 200, 214

humanism 91, 93, 222, 414–415, 418

ideology 3, 27, 34, 63, 65–66, 69, 81, 84, 137, 143, 145, 162–164, 166, 169, 189, 190–191, 194, 198–199, 201, 208, 249, 293, 350, 359, 412, 426, 428, 433, 448
imperialism 61, 103, 221, 225–226, 229–231, 326
individual, individualism 36–37, 83, 93, 105, 111, 117, 120, 122,

141–142, 178, 187, 189–191, 194–200, 250, 294, 298, 308–309
intelligentsia 75–76, 80, 141–142

justice 28–29, 85, 180–181, 194

kingship, monarchy 2–3, 9, 16, 25, 27, 29–31, 35, 37–38, 41, 44, 65, 69, 88, 294, 304–305, 308, 310, 422

language 10, 29, 33, 127–128, 146, 150, 152, 155–159, 163, 256–258, 284–285, 294, 359, 362–368, 389, 447–448
liberation 2, 26, 34–35, 51, 78, 83, 98, 180, 198, 417, 420
liberation theology 2, 70–71, 177–183, 186, 190, 213, 215

Marxism 70, 79, 91, 97–98, 181
materialism 90, 101, 103, 191
modernism, modernity 3, 9, 19–20, 69–70, 102, 104–105, 111–112, 144, 191–200, 222, 326, 328, 330–332, 338, 384
monarchy *see* kingship

national, ethnic, identity 17, 115, 117, 119–122, 128–129, 133, 151, 153–154, 208

pilgrimage, *see also* ritual procession 118, 127, 138, 311
popular religion 119–122, 170, 177, 207–208, 210, 213–214, 223
power 2–4, 164, 190, 193, 216, 224, 282–283, 381–404
prayer 13, 27–32, 386, 390, 400
priest, priesthood 15, 43, 63, 65, 69–70, 77, 79, 127–128, 133, 164, 208, 241–243, 247, 302, 304–306, 311
Protestant reformation 64, 66, 78–79, 121, 165, 185, 189, 191, 193–194, 209, 230, 301, 307, 313

reduction, theoretical 114, 349–351, 357, 368
religion
  academic study of ix, 113, 177, 357–359, 411–429
  and culture 62, 66, 68, 76–77, 101–102, 105, 198, 313, 351, 441
  and politics 1–3, 9, 18–19, 25, 44, 49, 64, 70, 86–88, 189, 192, 197, 293, 441
  and social change 3, 9, 25, 109, 114, 143, 183, 187, 392, 441
  definition of 2–3, 10, 61, 63, 76, 94, 161, 163–164, 293, 358–359, 382, 429
  established, state 45–46, 48, 65, 192, 208
  history of 2, 61, 70, 90, 323, 336–339, 349–354, 357–359, 367, 382, 411, 429
religious experience 67, 114–115, 119, 193, 383
  innovations 2, 109, 215
  persistence 133–134, 177, 183–187, 333–335, 393
  projection 25, 29, 37–38

revolution 2—3, 49—50, 64, 69, 83, 87, 97—98, 110, 115, 127, 132—133, 138, 161—171, 192, 195, 213
ritual 11, 16, 63, 67, 119, 133—134, 210, 246—248, 293, 297—299, 307—308, 325, 384, 388, 390, 449
ritual procession, *see also* pilgrimage 16—17, 133—134, 184, 212
rhetoric *see* discourse

sacrifice 16, 240, 293—314, 449
saints 118—119, 130, 143, 210—212, 214
secular, secularization 9, 26, 65—66, 75, 77—78, 80, 105, 132, 149, 154, 185, 194, 199, 209—210, 337—338, 382
science 20, 66—67, 75, 79—80, 92, 120, 191, 222, 359, 369, 412, 414—417, 421—423, 426, 429
socialism 91, 98—99, 101, 103, 144, 168, 312
social sciences viii, 75, 141, 222, 323—329, 350, 357—359, 441—451

theory 3, 79—80, 90, 117, 123, 207, 221—222, 229, 284, 293, 323—339, 349, 351, 357—368, 441—451
tradition 49, 88, 96, 256—257, 286, 323—326, 330

urban, urbanization 142, 144, 209, 212, 223, 326, 381, 384

Virgin Mary 118—119, 130, 132—136, 210—212, 228

women 42, 47—51, 240—249, 258, 303, 391—392, 396, 405, 422